



Loretta E. Lynch, U.S. attorney for the eastern district of New York, testifies at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the attorney general nomination on Capitol Hill in Washington. Lynch won confirmation as the first black woman U.S. attorney general Thursday from a Senate that forced her to wait more than five months for the title and remained divided to the end. (Gabiella Demczuk/The New York Times)

Lynch Wins Confirmation as US Attorney General

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American, Italian hostages killed in US drone strike

JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama revealed Thursday that U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan inadvertently killed an American and an Italian, two hostages held by al-Qaida, as well as two other Americans who had leadership roles with the terror network.

Obama somberly said he took full responsibility for the January CIA strikes and regretted the deaths of hostages Warren Weinstein and Giovanni Lo Porto, an Italian aid worker. The president cast the incident as a tragic consequence of the special difficulties of the fight against terrorists.

The incident is likely to spark fresh scrutiny of Obama's frequent use of drones to target terrorists and his pledge to strike only when there is "near certainty" that no civilians will be harmed.

Weinstein, who was captured as he neared the end of a contract assignment with the U.S. Agency for International Development, and Lo Porto were killed during a drone strike against an al-Qaida compound in Pakistan, near the Afghan border. U.S. officials said the compound was targeted because intelligence showed it was frequented by al-Qaida leaders. That same intelligence offered no indication the hostages were there, the officials said.

Ahmed Farouq, a dual U.S.-Pakistani national who was an al-Qaida opera-

tions leader in Pakistan, was killed in the strike, along with a small number of members of the terror organization, the officials said. Adam Gadahn, an

ous monitoring of the facility where Farouq was killed in the days leading up to the strike.

"We believed that this was an al-Qaida compound,

has carried out some 400 suspected drone strikes in Pakistan, according to the New America Foundation's International Security Program, which tracks the

John Boehner, welcomed Obama's review of the incident, calling it "entirely appropriate." And Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said it would be crucial to examine the operation "to make sure that the high standards that have been set were, in fact, met."

On Wednesday, Obama spoke with Weinstein's wife, Elaine, as well as Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

In a statement, Elaine Weinstein said the assistance her family received from the U.S. government was "inconsistent and disappointing."

"We hope that my husband's death and the others who have faced similar tragedies in recent months will finally prompt the U.S. government to take its responsibilities seriously and establish a coordinated and consistent approach to supporting hostages and their families," she said.

The White House said compensation would be paid to the Weinstein and Lo Porto families.

Weinstein, a 73-year-old development worker, was abducted in August 2011. His capture came just four days before his seven-year stint with the U.S. Agency for International Development was to end.

Lo Porto was working for the German aid group Welthungerhilfe when he was captured in Pakistan in January 2012. He was kidnapped together with German Bernd Muehlenbeck, who was freed last year. □



President Barack Obama pauses while speaking in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, Thursday, April 23, 2015. The president took full responsibility for deaths of American, Italian hostages, expresses apologies.
(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

American who served as an al-Qaida spokesman, was killed in a separate strike on a second compound.

"It is a cruel and bitter truth that in the fog of war generally and our fight against terrorists specifically, mistakes — sometimes deadly mistakes — can occur," Obama said at the White House.

U.S. officials said Farouq and Gadahn were not specifically targeted in the operations and there was no evidence they were at either compound. The officials said had they reviewed hundreds of hours of surveillance of the compounds, including continu-

ous monitoring of the facility where Farouq was killed in the days leading up to the strike.

"We believed that this was an al-Qaida compound, has carried out some 400 suspected drone strikes in Pakistan, according to the New America Foundation's International Security Program, which tracks the

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American campaign.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Obama did not personally sign off on the two drone strikes but believes they fell within the guidelines he has set for counterterror missions. Earnest also said the president did not regret the deaths of Farouq and Gadahn. Officials said it became evident in the weeks after the strikes that Weinstein, the American hostage, might have been killed. A final assessment was reached in recent days and administration officials started briefing members of Congress.

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Lynch wins confirmation as US Attorney General

ERICA WERNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Loretta Lynch won confirmation as the first black

York, at the Justice Department to replace Eric Holder. Holder has served in the job throughout the Obama administration, becoming

to stop the flow of Islamic State recruits to Syria and prevent destructive computer crime against American corporations. And

als and is seen as unlikely to depart in radical ways from Holder's priorities. But supporters expect her to bring her own understated and low-key management style, and she sought to assure anxious Republicans in recent months that she would arrive in Washington with her own law-and-order perspective

Lynch, 55, is seen as a no-nonsense prosecutor, and has wide law enforcement support. The issue that tore into her support with Republicans was immigration, and her refusal to denounce President Barack Obama's executive actions limiting deportations for millions of people living illegally in this country. Questioned on the issue at her confirmation hearing in January, she said she believed Obama's actions were reasonable and lawful.

Democrats angrily criticized Republicans for using the issue against her, saying an executive branch nominee could not be expected to disagree strongly with the president who appointed her, but Republicans were unapologetic.

Still, Lynch won the support of 10 Republicans, more than expected in the days heading into the vote.

From the White House,

Obama hailed her confirmation.

"Loretta has spent her life fighting for the fair and equal justice that is the foundation of our democracy," he said. "She will bring to bear her experience as a tough, independent and well-respected prosecutor on key, bipartisan priorities like criminal justice reform."

Lynch grew up in Durham, North Carolina, the daughter of an English teacher and a minister. Her father, Lorenzo Lynch, 83, watched from the Senate visitors' gallery Thursday as his daughter won confirmation. Afterward, he told reporters: "The good guys won. And that's what's been happening in this country all along, even during slavery."

The long delay in confirming Lynch since she was nominated in November incensed Democrats, with Obama himself weighing in last week to lament Senate dysfunction and decry the wait as "crazy" and "embarrassing." There were various reasons for the delay, most recently a lengthy and unexpected impasse over abortion on an unrelated bill to combat sex trafficking that McConnell insisted on finishing before moving to Lynch. □



Loretta Lynch's father, Lorenzo Lynch, center, accompanied by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, left, greets supporters off the Senate floor on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, April 23, 2015, after the Senate voted to confirm Loretta Lynch for Attorney General. Lynch won confirmation to serve as the nation's attorney general, ending months of delay. The vote was 56-43 in the Senate Thursday.

(AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

woman U.S. attorney general Thursday from a Senate that forced her to wait more than five months for the title and remained divided to the end.

The 56-43 vote installs Lynch, now U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New

a lightning rod for conservatives who perceived him as overly political and liberal, and even getting held in contempt of Congress. She is expected to be sworn in next week.

Lynch will inherit a department consumed by efforts

she'll arrive with the department at the center of dialogue on relations between police and minority communities.

Lynch will have limited time in the twilight of the Obama administration to craft ambitious new policy propos-

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Petraeus sentenced to 2 years' probation for military leak

MITCH WEISS

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (AP) —

Former CIA Director David Petraeus, whose career was destroyed by an extramarital affair with his biographer, was sentenced Thursday to two years' probation and fined \$100,000 for giving her classified material while she was working on the book. The sentencing came two months after he agreed to plead guilty to a federal misdemeanor count of unauthorized removal and retention of classified material.

The plea agreement carried a possible sentence of up to a year in prison. In court papers, prosecutors recommended two years' probation and a \$40,000 fine. But Judge David Keeler increased the fine to "reflect seriousness of the offense." He said Petraeus committed a "grave and uncharacteristic error in judgment." Appearing calm and wearing a business suit, Petraeus made a brief statement before he was sentenced, apologizing "for the pain my actions have caused."

Petraeus attorney Jake Sussman said this was not a case about the public dissemination of classified information, but the wrongful removal of materials.

But prosecutor James Melendres said, "This is a serious criminal offense. He was entrusted with the nation's most classified secrets. The defendant betrayed that trust". Melendres says Petraeus compounded that trust by "lying to the FBI."

In a brief statement after the hearing, Petraeus said this marks the end of a two-and-a-half year ordeal, and he just wants to move on. "I now look forward to moving on to the next phase of my life," he said, before walking to a waiting car and leaving.

The agreement was filed in federal court in Charlotte, the city where Paula Broadwell, the general's biographer and former lover, lives with her husband and children.

The prospect of probation for Petraeus had been raised as an issue in an unrelated case by supporters of Jeffrey Sterling, a former CIA officer convicted of giving a New York Times reporter classified details of an operation to derail Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Federal prosecutors in Virginia have urged a stiff sentence for Sterling, and probation officers have calculated a sentencing guidelines range of 20 to 24 years.

Supporters including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu argued that Sterling's expected sentence would be out of line with the deal that Petraeus secured.

The affair ruined the reputation of the retired four-star Army general who led U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As part of his deal, Petraeus agreed not to contest the facts laid out by the government.

Prosecutors said that while Broadwell was writing her book in 2011, Petraeus gave her eight binders of classified material he had improperly kept from his time as the top military commander in Afghanistan. Days later, he took the binders back to his house.

Among the secret information contained in the "black books" were the names of covert operatives, the coalition war strategy and notes about Petraeus' discussions with President Barack Obama and the National Security Council, prosecutors said. Those binders were later seized by the FBI in an April 2013 search of Petraeus' Arlington, Virginia, home, where he had kept them in the unlocked drawer of a desk in a ground-floor study.

Prosecutors said that after resigning from the CIA in November 2012, Petraeus had signed a form falsely attesting he had no classified material. He also lied to FBI agents by denying he supplied the information to Broadwell, according to court documents. □



Former CIA Director David Petraeus leaves the federal courthouse in Charlotte, N.C., Thursday, April 23, 2015 after pleading guilty to sharing top government secrets with his biographer. Petraeus, whose career was destroyed by an extramarital affair with his biographer, was sentenced Thursday to two years' probation and fined \$100,000 for giving her classified material while she was working on the book. (AP Photo/Chuck Burton)



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Tension in court as 4 Minnesota men held on terror charges



Members of Minnesota's Somali community cover their faces as they arrive Thursday, April 23, 2015, for a detention hearing in federal court in St. Paul, Minn. for four of the six Minnesotans who are accused of plotting to travel to Syria to join the Islamic State group. Prosecutors have said they plan to ask a judge to keep the men in custody pending trial, saying they are a flight risk.

(AP Photo/Jim Mone)

AMY FORLITI
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP)

— Attorneys for four Minnesota men accused of trying to travel to Syria to join the Islamic State group questioned the government's use of a paid infor-

mant, and argued Thursday that the case against their clients is slim.

But U.S. Magistrate Judge Becky Thorson found there was probable cause to believe a crime was committed, and she ordered the four men to remain in

custody while the case proceeds.

The men are among six who were charged over the weekend with conspiracy to support a foreign terrorist organization and with attempting to support a foreign terrorist organi-

zation. Authorities allege some of the men made repeated attempts to get to Syria, and had developed a plot to get fake passports and travel overseas through Mexico.

According to an FBI affidavit, the government's months-long investigation was aided by recordings made by a man who once planned to travel to Syria himself, but then decided to cooperate.

Thursday's hearing was for Guled Omar, 20; Adnan Abdihamid Farah, 19; Zacharia Yusuf Abdurrahman, 19; and Hanad Mustafa Musse, 19. Two other men, Mohamed Abdihamid Farah, 21, and Abdurrahman Daud, 21, faced hearings in San Diego, where they were arrested. In ordering the four men detained, Thorson said she was looking at the weight of the evidence and other factors. Her ruling prompted one man to shout: "You cannot weight anything but evidence, ma'am. We are the community! You should ask us!" He was led from the courtroom.

The hearing was tense for

community members. Afterward, Halima Ahmed, the grandmother of the two Farah brothers, said someone was behind the recruiting.

"Please, we need help!" she shouted, later adding. "Who's doing this? We asking America government to find who's behind this problem."

In court, defense attorneys questioned FBI Special Agent Harry Samit about the government's payments to the informant. Musse's attorney, Andy Birrell, asked whether his compensation was related to the number of people who wound up being charged.

Defense attorneys also questioned how the FBI could take the informant's word when he previously lied to them about his own involvement. They also questioned why only some of his conversations were recorded, and asked whether it was the informant's idea to pursue fake passports to get to Syria.

Samit testified the informant was paid nearly \$13,000 for expenses and "services" and the amount wasn't related to the number of people charged. Samit said the informant was being asked to gather evidence against people involved in "the most violent terrorist group in the world."

"He's exposing himself to a certain element of danger," Samit said.

Samit also said the investigation was broader than just the informant's evidence, and agents verified some details through their own surveillance.

As for why not all conversations were recorded, Samit said some early conversations happened before the informant was given recording equipment. He also said some conversations weren't recorded because of equipment failure or poor sound quality.

The fake passports were initially Abdurrahman's idea, Samit testified, but when that fell through, the FBI suggested the informant come up with new contacts for fake passports. □

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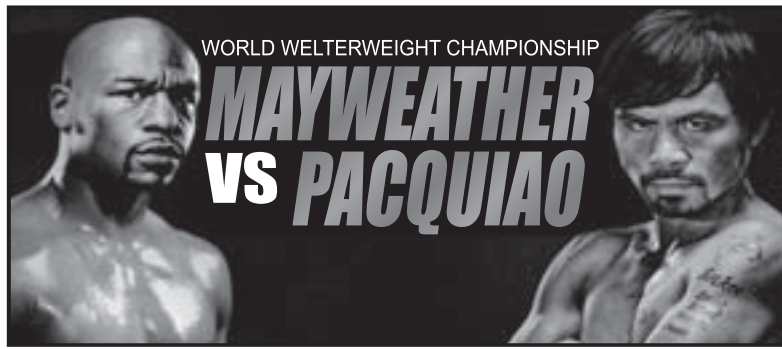
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US Financial Front:

American new-home sales volatile from February to March



A flag advertising a newly built home for sale flaps in the breeze in Richmond, Va. The Commerce Department released new home sales for March on Thursday, April 23, 2015. (AP Photo/Steve Helber)

JOSH BOAK
AP Economics Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — Sales of new U.S. homes plummeted in March, as the spring buying season opened with sharp declines in the Northeast and South. The Commerce Department said Thursday that new-home sales fell 11.4 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 481,000. This marks a swift reversal from an annual sales pace of 543,000 in February, which had been the strongest performance in seven years. Purchases of new homes have been volatile on a monthly basis, although sales during the first quarter of 2015 are higher than in 2014. The volatility points to a real estate market still finding its footing in the aftermath of the housing bubble that triggered the Great Recession in 2007 and the weak recovery that has followed. "The pace is sluggish, but the trend in new home sales is still higher, said Jennifer Lee, a senior econo-

mist at BMO Capital Markets. "Don't be surprised to see a bounce back in April." New-homes sales last month plunged 33 percent in the Northeast and 15.8 percent in the South, while the West registered a slight loss and the Midwest reported a modest gain. The median sales price fell 1.7 percent since March 2014 to \$277,400. Despite last month's sales decline, homebuilders are hopeful that the spring buying season will draw more buyers. Winter storms in January and February closed construction sites and likely pushed back potential March sales to later in the year. At the same time, a yearlong hiring spree coupled with low mortgage rates has expanded the number of people shopping for a home. The National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo builder sentiment index rose in April, and the outlook for sales of single-family houses over the next six months climbed to its high-

est level since December. In a separate report Wednesday, sales of existing homes surged in March. The higher demand, however, has yet to cause additional listings to come onto the market. That could prompt construction firms to quicken the pace of building, leading more buyers to choose to purchase a new home instead. Sales of existing homes rose 6.1 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.19 million, the National Association of Realtors said in its report. The existing-home market had just 4.6 months of supply nationwide, well below the six months of supply that economists say would reflect a healthy market. Some homeowners are choosing to renovate instead of selling their home and upgrading. An index measuring renovation plans by Houzz, an online firm for home remodeling and design, rose during the first three months of this year compared to the end of 2014.

There is also rising demand for housing as the economic recovery approaches its seventh year. Job growth and low mortgage rates have put homebuyers in a stronger financial position. Employers have added 3.1 million jobs over the past year, as the unemployment rate has tumbled from 6.6 percent to 5.5 percent. The hiring has increased the

number of paychecks in the economy and created more potential for consumers to spend. It has also become cheaper to borrow to buy a home. Average 30-year fixed rates were 3.65 percent this week, according to the mortgage giant Freddie Mac. That average has dropped sharply from a 52-week high of 4.33 percent. □

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American Living:

Mets Fans Have an Unfamiliar Feeling: Optimism

KIRK SEMPLE

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NEW YORK - Ask a group of New York Mets fans to name the worst moment of the team's 53-year history and brace for a lengthy exercise in one-downmanship, as they argue the relative horrors of bad trades, blown leads and terrible performances on the field and at the plate.

For many fans, however, there has been no nadir so much as one vast slough of underachievement, made all the more difficult to bear when viewed against the near-perennial glories of their crosstown rivals, the New York Yankees.

To call them rivals, though,

has been something of a misnomer, much like equating Kraft Singles and Camembert because they are both called cheese. The Yankees - with 27 World Series titles, an enormous payroll of household names and a global following - tend to win. The Mets do not.

But the winds of fortune that have blown forever in favor of Yankee Stadium in the South Bronx appear to have reversed course somewhere over the East River and are gusting toward the Mets' Citi Field in Flushing, Queens, 6 1/2 miles away. And Mets fans have entered the new season with an unfamiliar confidence.



Fans during a New York Mets game at Citi Field in New York, April 19, 2015. The Mets' fast start this season, a 12-3 record built on the backs of talented young players, has led Mets supporters to assert that this may be the year that their team wrests control of bragging rights in New York City from the Yankees and captures the attention of the broader public.

(Piotr Redlinski/The New York Times)

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As the two teams approach a three-game tilt this weekend, the Mets are the hottest team in baseball, with a 12-3 record entering Thursday. The Yankees were 8-7.

The Mets' fast start, on the backs of talented young players, has led Mets supporters to assert that this may be the year that their team wrests control of bragging rights in New York City and captures the attention of the broader public. It is a prediction that even some Yankees supporters, with desultory glances at their shoelaces, begrudgingly acknowledge.

"The fan base is absolutely starving for baseball that isn't a punch line," Steve Somers, a host on the sports radio station WFAN and a swami of Mets fandom, said in a telephone interview. "After the opening day you could

feel the tide turning and the tone being set that the New York Metropolitan were about to reclaim what was rightfully theirs." Based on the "very small sample" of games so far, he said, the Mets "have shown their fan base and the city of New York, if you will, that they are the better baseball team."

Mets fans have adopted a new calendar system to mark the shift, with 2015 being "1 A.D." - After Derek, as in Jeter, the Yankees' high-wattage shortstop who retired last year. A #TakeBackNewYork rallying cry has echoed across social media. Citi Field has seen huge attendance numbers during its current 10-game homestand, and Mets fans say the energy in the stadium, contrary to the atmosphere in recent years, has been electric.

Being a Mets fan, however,

is to be nothing if not a realist after so many years in which spring hopes were rendered hollow in the autumn, if not well before. In interviews with Mets fans in recent days - mostly in and around the crucible of Mets allegiance, Citi Field - optimism was ascendant though still freighted with the memory of despair.

"They always start the season strong," said Andrew Botelho, 27, who was sitting with two friends, Richard Freund and Nathaniel Alejandro, in the stadium parking lot before a game against the Miami Marlins on Sunday. They were swigging beer out of plastic cups. "Hopefully this is the year," he said, not sounding totally confident. He explained that caution was "embedded" in him; the possibility of failure lurked in ambush.

Continued on page 27

EU's promised action on migration crisis criticized as inadequate

DAN BILEFSKY

© 2015 New York Times

BRUSSELS - Struggling to cope with a migrant crisis in the Mediterranean, Eu-

and that they would not do nearly enough to stem the flow of illegal migrants or prevent disasters like the capsizing of a ship carry-

demanding more money and more action from their richer partners to the north, including Germany. The latest draft agreement

for Migration together have called on the Europeans to show leadership in responding to "a tragedy of epic proportions." Amnesty In-

Jobbik in Hungary and the U.K. Independence Party in Britain.

"The EU hasn't had a coherent immigration policy since forever, and the situation is getting worse since the Arab Spring," said Camino Mortera-Martinez, a research fellow at the Center for European Reform in London.

"Now, there has been a wake-up call. But I am skeptical that things will change much. Europeans are less concerned about people who are not European."

It is not clear how effectively the measures under discussion in Brussels would deter the thousands of people fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East from trying to reach European soil however they could.

They would do little to address the lawlessness in much of Libya, the primary departure point for smugglers' boats.

And some critics said the proposals would not give authorities along Europe's southern tier the means or the authority they need to intercept and turn back migrant vessels early in their voyages.

The 28-member bloc has had a hard time forging a common policy. Southern nations like Italy, Greece and Malta, where streams of African migrants arrive by boat, have called for aggressive collective action. □



Protestors march with mock coffins of migrants during a demonstration outside of an emergency EU summit in Brussels on Thursday, April 23, 2015. Protestors on Thursday called on EU leaders to take more effective action to save lives in the Mediterranean, where hundreds of migrants are missing and feared drowned in recent days.

(AP Photo/Geert Vanden Wijngaert)

ropean leaders promised Thursday to double their spending on border protection, and were discussing plans to "identify, capture and destroy" smugglers' boats before they can set sail, among other measures.

But experts and advocacy groups said that the plans were far too small in scale,

ing African migrants off the coast of Libya last weekend, which killed as many as 900 people. Funerals for 24 of the victims were held Thursday in Malta.

Leaders of EU nations gathered in Brussels on Thursday for an emergency meeting on the issue, with the hard-pressed southern members, like Italy, Greece and Spain,

under discussion also calls for the union to create a resettlement program for migrants, with 5,000 places available. But with migrants arriving at a rate of hundreds and sometimes thousands a week, a program of that size would probably soon be swamped.

U.N. agencies and the International Organization

ternational said before the meeting that the proposals being considered were a "pitifully inadequate and shameful response."

At the same time, many of the European leaders must contend with growing anti-immigration political pressure at home, much of it from far-right parties like the National Front in France,



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Saudi-led airstrikes bomb Yemen's Shiite rebels in 6 cities

AHMED AL-HAJ
Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Attempts to ease fighting in Yemen appeared to falter Thursday, as Shiite rebels pressed an offensive in the south and a Saudi Arabia-led coalition intensified its airstrikes less than two days after it said it was scaling back the campaign.

All sides have declared their willingness to enter talks, but none has taken any steps to end the conflict that has killed more than 1,000 people.

Still, the head of U.N. operations in Yemen said in an interview with The Associated Press that a renewal of such talks is "inevitable," and behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts could bring results in the coming weeks.

The battle in the Arab world's poorest country pits the Iranian-backed rebels known as Houthis and their allies — military units loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh — against the Saudi-led coalition and the forces of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. Although Hadi is the internationally recognized leader, he was forced to

flee his southern stronghold of Aden last month as the Houthis advanced toward the port. He is in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

Western governments and the Sunni Arab countries in the coalition say the Houthis

police club occupied by the Houthis and their allies. Heavy strikes also hit positions in five other cities, many of them gateways to Aden, officials said.

At least six airstrikes targeted an air base, a military camp,

ing weapons, officials said. Rebel reinforcements were bombed in the central province of Marib, while in the city of Dhale, another gateway to the south, airstrikes targeted suspected weapons depots and assembly points for fighters. Residents of Dahle said the city was being shelled by the Houthis and forces loyal to Saleh, Yemen's longtime authoritarian leader who was a staunch U.S. ally.

All the Yemeni officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media, and witnesses asked not to be identified, fearing for their safety.

On Tuesday, Saudi Arabia announced an end of the first phase of its coalition's month-old air campaign against the Houthis, who swept out of the north and advanced toward southern Yemen. The Saudis said a new phase called "Renewal of Hope" was beginning, focused on diplomacy, protecting civilians, counterterrorism and halting future military actions by the Houthis. The rebels and their allies have lost little ground despite the airstrikes, with Houthis controlling the north and the capital of Sanaa, while trying to make inroads in the southern and central

provinces. Hadi and the rest of his cabinet are operating from exile in Saudi Arabia. Aden is being besieged by the Houthis and Saleh's forces.

Yemeni activist Walid Saleh said the coalition is trying to push its opponents into a corner, while the rebels will continue to try to take over Aden to force more concessions.

A U.N. Security Council resolution passed April 14 includes demands that the Houthis withdraw from areas they have seized, including Sanaa, and relinquish arms and missiles seized from military and security institutions. Saudi Arabia maintains that those preconditions must be met before any real reconciliatory talks can begin, according to a top Hadi aide who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to reporters. Other than implementing the resolution, "all doors are closed," the aide said by phone from Riyadh. Independent Yemeni political analyst Fathi Nasr said Tuesday's announcement by Saudi Arabia of the curtailing of airstrikes was "a smart move that won appeal from the international community, while at the same time, nothing changed on the ground." □



Paolo Lembo, U.N. Resident Coordinator in Yemen, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Amman, Jordan, Thursday, April 23, 2015. The head of U.N. operations in Yemen says a resumption of peace talks is "inevitable" and that he expects behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts to bring results in the coming weeks despite continued fighting in the country.
(AP Photo/Raad Adayleh)

get their arms from Shiite powerhouse Iran. Tehran and the rebels deny that, although the Islamic Republic has provided political and humanitarian support to the Shiite group.

Warplanes hammered Aden, hitting hotels and a

and weapon caches in the western port of Houdida. In the western city of Taiz, jets bombed the headquarters of Battalion 35, led by pro-Saleh commanders. In the nearby city of Ibb, the planes targeted educational facilities suspected of stor-



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Africa, Asia leaders agree to cooperate against terrorism

NINIEK KARMINI
Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Asian and African leaders agreed to develop concrete ways to cooperate in fighting extremism and the financing of terrorism, they said at the conclusion of a summit in Indonesia's capital Thursday.

The leaders said in a joint statement their cooperative efforts would involve countering the appeal of terrorism, countering violent extremism and countering the use of Internet for terrorist purposes. They also would try to fight together against the funding of terrorism, including through payment of ransoms.

"We all condemn acts of

extremism and terrorism in the name of religions, and promote dialogues among cultures and religious," Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said in his closing remarks.

At least 110 Asian-African Conference member countries attended the summit, including Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korea's No. 2 leader Kim Yong Nam, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. The summit attendees also repeated a call for reforming the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to better represent Asia and Africa. □





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Chechen leader to men: Fire on unauthorized federal troops

LYNN BERRY
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — In defiance of those in Moscow eager to curb his powers, Chechnya's strongman leader told his security forces to open fire on Russian federal troops if they tried to operate in the region without his approval.

Russian law enforcement agencies have been increasingly dismayed by the growing ambitions of Ramzan Kadyrov, who in exchange for the relative calm he has installed in Chechnya after two separatist wars has been allowed to maintain his own feared security forces.

A statement from the Russian Interior Ministry, which runs the country's police, said Kadyrov's order was "unacceptable."

Since taking over after the 2004 assassination of his father, Kadyrov has ruled under the personal protection of President Vladimir Putin. The Russian leader has continued to stand by Kadyrov even as hostility to him grows in some Moscow power centers.

Kadyrov was angered by the killing of a wanted man in the Chechen capital on Sunday in a special operation carried out by federal forces stationed in Chechnya and police troops from a nearby region. He told his men not to allow this to happen again.

"I would like to officially state: Open fire if someone from Moscow or Stavropol, it doesn't matter, appears on your turf without your knowledge," he said in an address to his forces late Wednesday. "We have to be reckoned with."

Kadyrov's private army came under the spotlight last month when a Chechen police officer was arrested as one of the main suspects in the Feb. 27 murder of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov.

Kadyrov praised the suspect, Zaur Dadaev, as a brave soldier and a deeply religious man.

Investigators, however, have been unable to reach his commander, Ruslan Geremeyev, a senior officer in Kadyrov's security forces who is suspected of



Chechen regional leader Ramzan Kadyrov talks with the press in the Chechen regional capital, Grozny, Russia. Ramzan Kadyrov's comments on Wednesday, April 22, 2015 send a worrying sign about a potential rift between him and the Kremlin. The head of Chechnya has allowed local security forces to open fire on federal troops if they operate in the region without his approval.

(AP Photo/Musa Sadulayev)

involvement in the killing. This has raised concerns about Putin's authority and possible future threats to national stability. Lawyers representing Nemtsov's children said Thursday that they have formally requested that investigators ques-

tion Kadyrov and several of his closest allies in the murder case. "The investigators are working and this is good, but on the territory of Chechnya their activities have been impeded," lawyer Vadim Prokhorov was quoted by Interfax as say-

ing. After Nemtsov's killing, some observers speculated that the slaying might have been ordered by Kadyrov's enemies in the federal government in an attempt to force Putin to replace or clamp down on the Chechen leader. □

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Panama acts to clean up reputation for money laundering

JUAN ZAMORANO

Associated Press

PANAMA CITY (AP) — Panama took a major step in an effort to clean up its reputation as Latin America's premier hub for money laundering.

The nation's legislature late Wednesday unanimously approved a proposed law that will toughen supervision of more than a dozen non-finan-

cial sectors where illicit proceeds from the sale of narcotics, corruption and terrorism have seeped into Panama's booming economy in recent years. The landmark legislation, which requires everyone from lawyers and real estate brokers to casinos and construction firms to report suspicious transactions, is the key component of Panama's cam-

paign to win a stamp of approval from the world's richest nations, which in recent years have clamped down on tax havens and shadow banking centers. Last year, the Financial Action Task Force, an inter-government body representing the world's most-developed economies, placed Panama on its "gray list" of 19 financial jurisdictions including

Argentina, Syria and Zimbabwe that have major deficiencies in combating money laundering and terror financing.

Panama's financial oversight has strengthened since the dictatorship of Gen. Manuel Noriega during the 1980s, when the country was a banking center for Colombian drug cartels and corrupt institutions. But a bus-

ting dollarized economy at the crossroads of the Americas continues to make Panama an attractive offshore banking center.

Driven by traffic through the Panama Canal, economic growth has averaged 8 percent annually over the past decade — far outstripping the performance of every other Latin American nation. □

Calbuco volcano erupts in Chile; ash causing concern

LUIS HIDALGO

LUIS HENAO

Associated Press

PUERTO MONTT, Chile (AP)

— Twin blasts from the Calbuco volcano in southern Chile sent vast clouds of ash into the sky, increasing concerns the dust could contaminate water, cause respiratory illnesses and ground more flights.

The volcano erupted Wednesday afternoon for the first time in more than four decades, spewing out a plume of ash more than 6 miles (10 kilometers) high. Emergency officials were taken by surprise and had only a few minutes to issue an alert.

Calbuco had another spectacular outburst early Thursday with lightning crackling through a dark sky turned reddish orange by the explosion.

As the ash cloud spread Wednesday, "people went into a state of panic," said Miguel Silva Diaz, an engineer who lives in Puerto

Montt, a city about 14 miles (22 kilometers) from the volcano. "Then, at around 1 a.m., I heard a

loud noise, as if somebody had detonated an atomic bomb." No injuries were reported

and Puerto Montt, some 620 miles (1,000 kilometers) south of Santiago.

"I was shocked. I had

photos," said Daniel Palma, a psychologist who lives in Puerto Varas.

"We woke up today with a blanket of fog and it hasn't cleared. We have a layer of smoke above us," Palma said, adding that many were concerned about the possible effects of the ash on their health.

The Chilean national geology and mining service warned that people should prepare for a third and "even more aggressive eruption."

President Michelle Bachelet declared a state of emergency, saying the eruption of Calbuco was "more serious and unpredictable" than the one last month at the Villarica volcano, which also forced the evacuation of thousands.

"We don't have any problems with supplies, water or sewage up to now. That's not the problem," said Bachelet, who visited the area Thursday. □



Men remove ash from a building's roof, left by the Calbuco volcano, in Ensenada, Chile, Thursday, April 23, 2015. The volcano erupted Wednesday for the first time in more than 42 years, billowing a huge ash cloud over a sparsely populated, mountainous area in southern Chile.

(AP Photo/Pablo Sanhueza Gutierrez)

and the only person reported missing since the eruption was located Thursday. Authorities evacuated 4,000 people as gas and

ash continued to spew, and they closed access to the area around the volcano, which lies near the cities of Puerto Varas

just arrived home when I looked through the window and saw the column of smoke rising up. We called our families, posted

Puerto Rico bank warns of a government shutdown

DANICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Puerto Rico's Government Development Bank warned this week that it is very likely the U.S. territory's government could be forced to shut down in the next three months because of a lack of funds.

The bank made the warning in a letter made public a day after it was sent to Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla and the presidents of the island's Senate and

House of Representatives. "The island's financial state is extremely uncertain," the letter said. "A government shutdown would have a devastating impact on the economy, with salary and public service cuts, and a long and painful recovery."

Bank officials said in the letter that the government's fiscal problems will prevent it from selling more bonds in the capital market as planned, and they urged legislators to immediately

implement measures to cut costs and balance the budget. The government had been preparing to issue more than \$2 billion in bonds in the coming months in part to strengthen debt-ridden agencies. Bank officials said the government needs to approve a five-year plan to help reduce a \$73 billion public debt as well as approve sweeping changes to the island's troubled tax system.

Once the government

does that and presents a balanced budget, then it can be in a better position to issue bonds, said David Chafey, president of the bank's board of directors. "Time is passing, and it's passing quickly," he told The Associated Press. "We need to provide investors with some kind of comfort."

Economist Charles Blitzer, a former World Bank and IMF official, said he wasn't surprised by the bank's assessment, adding that

U.S. investors overall have known that liquidity is very low.

"What's a surprise is typically one agency of the government doesn't write to the rest of the government in quite this way," he said in a phone interview. The letter was issued as Garcia faces opposition from members of his party on a measure that would impose a 16 percent value-added tax that he says is needed to help generate more revenue. □



Renaissance Marketplace marks International Jazz Day with free concert!



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ORANJESTAD - Renaissance Marketplace Aruba joins the talented Carlos Bislip Jazz Expo to present the public with a free concert in connection with the International Jazz Day. Everybody is welcome to come on Thursday April 30th, starting at 6 pm, to enjoy the musical performances by a number of groups and artists from the island and abroad.

This night will have as main attraction, the lovely presence and talent of American singer Lenora Zenzalai Helm.

Renaissance Marketplace is well known for its wonderful atmosphere. This even more so during musical events when you can listen from your table at one of our cafes or get on your feet in front of our main stage under the sky. Undoubtedly, the mall located in Oranjestad, is the perfect setting to receive all the island's jazz lovers



and also those among our dear visitors.

Lenora Zenzalai Helm is an award winning jazz vocal musician, composer, lyricist and educator with two de-

acades of international acclaim. Ms. Helm has toured with her group internationally, performed on prestigious jazz festivals and in jazz concert halls, and re-

corded with the biggest names in jazz.

Her discography includes recordings of her own, and as a featured guest with Donald Brown, Ron Carter,

Stanley Cowell, Antonio Hart, Andrew Hill, Dave Liebman and Branford Marsalis.

The special program put together for the International Jazz Day 2015 includes the musical acts of The Student Caribbean Jazz Combo, The Kross/Hart Project, The Lionel Scholten & Eduardo Maya Tropical Jazz, The Aruba Vocal Ensemble and also Jam Session.

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ORANJESTAD - Expect lots of hip, hip, hurray's for King Willem-Alexander during the upcoming High Wine event at lovely De Suikertuin restaurant on King's Day, April 27. From 2 – 5 pm it's time to toast to him and his gorgeous Queen Maxima with three excellent wines from Pepia Est and sumptuous snacks.

The High Wine is a new concept: it is a mix between a brunch and a cocktail hour. At De Suikertuin in the Wilhelminastraat downtown, you will be served a variety of small bites that go together well with the wines. Reservations are required for this event.

The first wine, a Villa Sandi Prosecco, will be accompanied by a fish duo, olives and feta cheese and a crostini with grouper and dill, followed by a croque-monsieur with a tomato-basil soup.



The glass of Anterra Chardonnay comes with a cheese selection and toast,

a spinach, goat cheese and bacon puff, while an Anterra Merlot is treated to

a wrap with avocado and chicken and a roast beef and blue cheese slider, all

served in a unique way. So don't wait too long and call De Suikertuin at 582-

6322 for a really happy King's Day celebration. Cheers! ☐

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PALM BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring two loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba, as Distinguished Visitors, at the Casa Del Mar Beach Resort. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 consecutive years. The honorees were Mr. John and Mrs. Connie Hixenbaugh.



The honorees are loyal members of Casa Del Mar, and they love Aruba for the friendly people, the weather, the beaches and the restaurants. They always say that Aruba is truly 'One Happy Island!'

Ms. Darline S. de Cuba representing Aruba Tourism Authority, Mr. Bob Curtis, Manager of Casa del Mar and Nohely Cannegieter conducted the ceremony held at Casa Del Mar Beach Resort. ☐



Lance Armstrong: WADA head rebuffed proposed meeting in 2013

JIM VERTUNO

AP Sports Writer

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) —

Lance Armstrong said Wednesday that the World Anti-Doping Agency and others are "owed an apology" from him for cheating during his cycling career, but noted that the agency's chief rebuffed efforts to meet back in 2013.

David Howman, director general of WADA, told The Associated Press this week that he is disappointed Armstrong had not apologized for costly and time-consuming lawsuits before the former cycling champion admitted using performance-enhancing drugs. Armstrong initially declined comment on Howman's remark, but on Wednesday provided the AP with a May 2013 email exchange with Howman, who initially indicated he could meet with Armstrong, then backed off under advice from WADA lawyers.

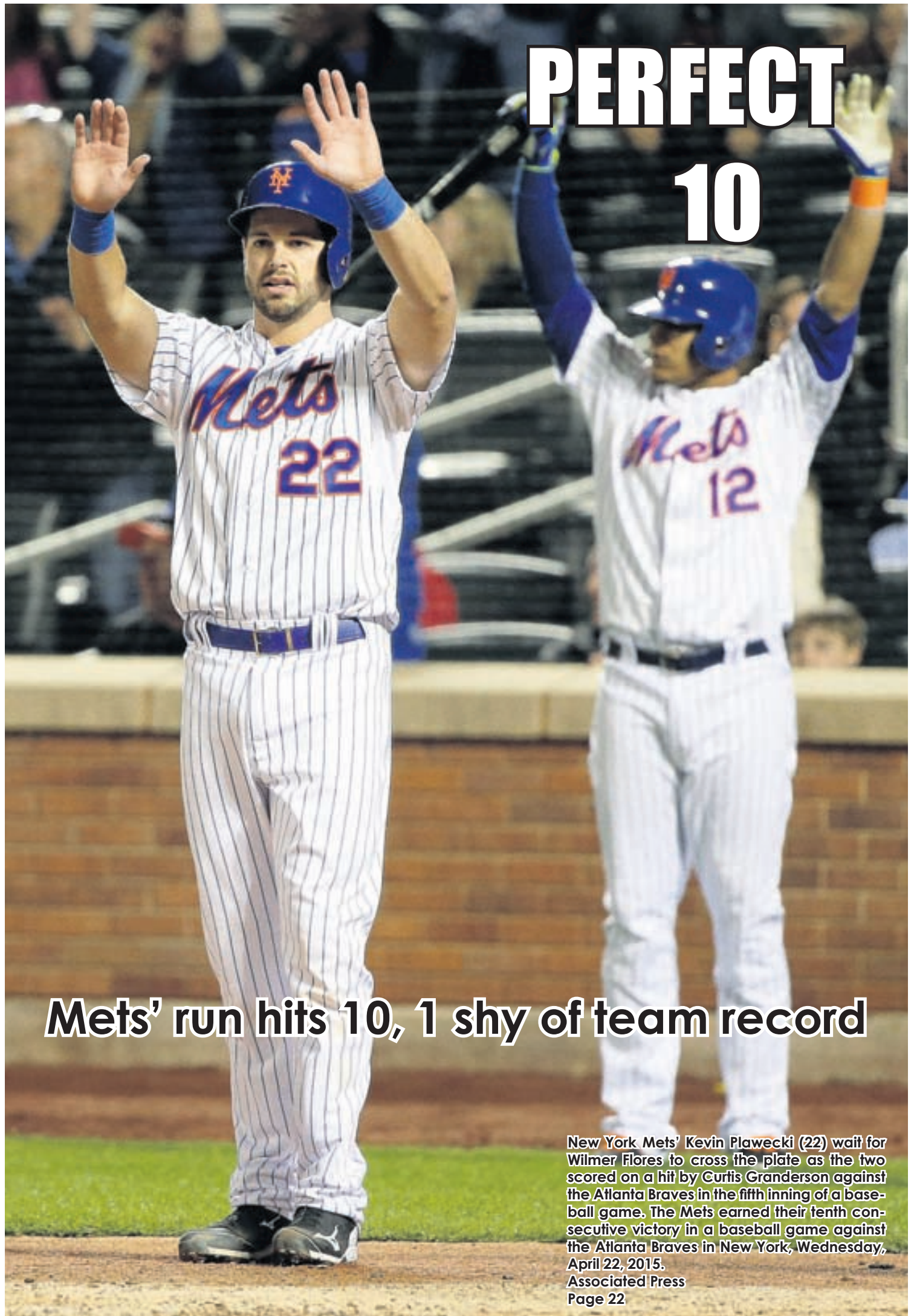
"I can talk at a suitable time and at a suitable place ... What do you suggest?" Howman responded to Armstrong's first inquiry about a meeting.

A few days later, after Armstrong recounted his upcoming schedule, Howman broke off the discussion.

"Having reflected upon your request to meet with me, and having taken advice from our lawyers, it is apparent that it is a situation where little, if anything, can be gained from such a meeting," Howman wrote Armstrong.

Howman did not immediately respond Wednesday to requests for comment.

Continued on page 22



Mets' run hits 10, 1 shy of team record

New York Mets' Kevin Plawecki (22) wait for Wilmer Flores to cross the plate as the two scored on a hit by Curtis Granderson against the Atlanta Braves in the fifth inning of a baseball game. The Mets earned their tenth consecutive victory in a baseball game against the Atlanta Braves in New York, Wednesday, April 22, 2015.
Associated Press
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Spurs win in OT at Clippers to square series

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tim Duncan scored 28 points, Kawhi Leonard added 23 and the defending champion San Antonio Spurs beat the Los Angeles Clippers 111-107 in overtime Wednesday night, tying their Western Conference playoff series at 1-1.

The Spurs blew 10-point leads in the third and fourth quarters, and got into overtime on a pair of free throws by Patty Mills with 8 seconds left in regulation. Duncan scored four straight points in the extra session while playing with five fouls.

His jumper snapped a 101-all tie, Mills followed with a fast-break layup off Leonard's long pass, and Leonard scored on a layup for a 107-101 lead with 56 seconds left.

Mills finished with 18 points off the bench after starting point guard Tony Parker departed early with an injury. Boris Diaw had 12.

The series, the only one of the eight in the first round that is tied after two games, moves to San Antonio for Game 3 on Friday night.

Blake Griffin had his first career playoff triple-double of 29 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists, but a costly turnover late in regulation. DeAndre Jordan had 20 points and 15 rebounds for the Clippers.

HAWKS 96, NETS 91

ATLANTA (AP) — Paul Millsap scored 19 points and top-seeded Atlanta again survived a tougher-than-expected test from Brooklyn, holding on for a 2-0 lead in their Eastern Con-



San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan, right, shoots over Los Angeles Clippers center DeAndre Jordan during the first half of Game 2 of a first-round NBA basketball playoff series in Los Angeles, Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

Associated Press

ference playoff series.

Squandering an early 12-point lead, the Hawks fell behind before half-time and spent the rest of the game struggling to put away the No. 8 seed.

It went down to the wire. Deron Williams missed an

open 15-foot jumper that would've tied it with about 10 seconds to go. Kyle Korver rebounded, was fouled and made two free throws to clinch Atlanta's win.

The best-of-seven shifts to Brooklyn for the next two contests. Game 3 is Satur-

day.

Millsap, who missed five games near the end of the season with a sprained right shoulder, ditched a pad that he felt restricted his shooting motion. He responded by hitting 7 of 11 shots.

GRIZZLIES 97, TRAIL BLAZERS 82

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Mike Conley and Courtney Lee each scored 18 points, and Memphis beat Portland to grab the franchise's first 2-0 lead in a playoff series. □

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Nadal loses to Fognini in 2 sets at Barcelona Open

JOSEPH WILSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Rafael Nadal's clay-court woes mounted Thursday at the Barcelona Open with another loss.

The eight-time champion lost to Fabio Fognini 6-4, 7-6 (6) in the third round, a year after his 41-match winning streak ended in the quarterfinals.

After losing the first set, Nadal appeared to have rebounded by breaking his Italian opponent three times in the second set, but Fognini answered each time.

In the tiebreaker, Nadal trailed 6-3 but came back to 6-6. Fognini then went ahead and Nadal drove a shot long for only his third loss at the tournament.

After winning their first four career meetings, Nadal has lost twice to Fognini this year on his preferred surface.

Nadal, a nine-time French

Open champion, was trying to rebound from last week's loss to Novak Djokovic at the Monte Carlo Masters.

The 28-year-old Nadal has now failed to reclaim his title at two tournaments he has won a record eight times, casting doubt on his ability to defend the French Open title.

The 13th-seeded Fognini, who had never won a match at the Real Club de Tennis before winning his second-round opener, will next face Pablo Andujar of Spain. Andujar beat Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4.

Earlier, defending champion Kei Nishikori advanced by beating Santiago Giraldo of Colombia 6-2, 6-1, and four-time finalist David Ferrer defeated Swedish 19-year-old Elias Ymer 6-3, 6-4.

Nishikori beat Giraldo last year in straight sets to win his first clay-court title in Barcelona, and the top-



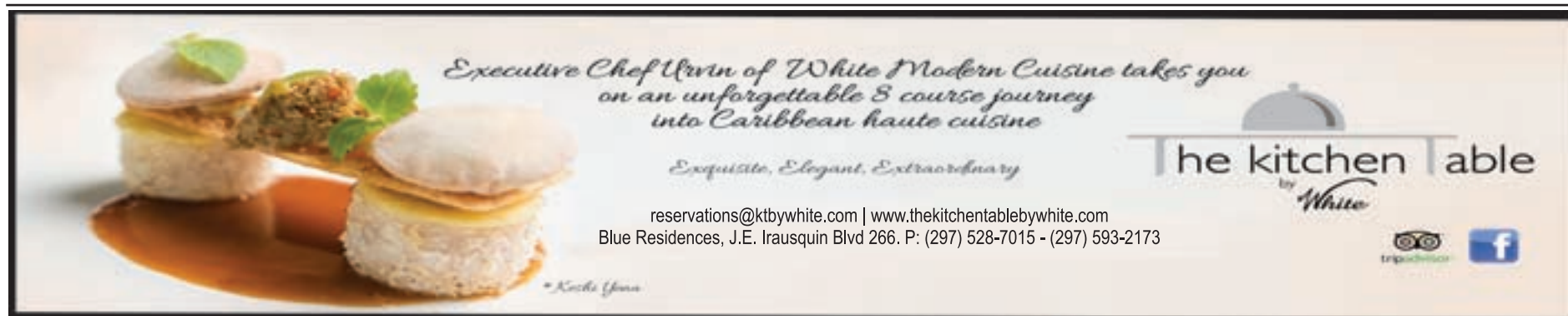
Fabio Fognini, from Italy, gestures in the match against Rafael Nadal of Spain during the Barcelona open tennis in Barcelona, Spain, Thursday, April 23, 2015. Fognini defeated Nadal in the match.
Associated Press

seeded Japanese player had little trouble repeating his victory after converting five of nine break points. Nishikori will next play Roberto Bautista Agut next after the Spaniard defeated 10th-seeded Pablo Cuevas 7-6 (5), 6-2.

Ferrer appeared set to roll to a lopsided win over Ymer after taking a 5-0 lead. But even though Ymer ceded the first set, he won seven of the next eight games to go up 4-0 in the second. Ferrer surged back to win six straight games, and

closed out the match by claiming 11 of the last 12 points.

Martin Klizan also joined the final eight after ending 34-year-old Victor Estrella's strong start to the tournament with a 6-4, 6-3 victory. □



Hayes scores in OT, Rangers beat Penguins 2-1

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Kevin Hayes scored at 3:14 of overtime to give the New York Rangers a 2-1 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Wednesday in Game 4 of the NHL Eastern Conference first-round series.

The Rangers lead the series 3-1 heading back to New York for Game 5 on Friday night.

In overtime, Martin St. Louis started a goalmouth scramble when he threw the puck in front on a wraparound attempt. The puck pinballed to Carl Hagelin and went across the crease for Hayes to flip it past fallen goalie Marc-Andre Fleury. The point was Hayes' first in the postseason.

New York's Derick Brassard tied it at 1 with 2:45 left in the second period with his third goal of the series. Patric Hornqvist opened the scoring at 2:22 of the first period.

Fleury and New York's Henrik Lundqvist each made 22 saves.

Pittsburgh is a loss away from elimination after dropping consecutive home playoff games to the NHL's best regular-season road team. The Rangers have won 12 of their last 13 on



New York Rangers' Kevin Hayes (13) celebrates his overtime goal with Carl Hagelin (62) in a first-round NHL playoff hockey game against the Pittsburgh Penguins in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

the road, allowing 15 goals.

DUCKS 5, JETS 2

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Ryan Kesler scored twice in the third period and Anaheim beat Winnipeg to sweep the Western Conference first-round series.

Andrew Cogliano, Emerson Etem and Sam Vatanen — into an empty net — also scored, and Frederik Andersen made 25 saves. The Ducks are the first team to advance to the second

round.

Bryan Little and Mark Stuart scored for Winnipeg.

Anaheim will face Calgary or Vancouver in the second round. Calgary leads that series 3-1.

The Jets/Atlanta Thrashers franchise remains without a playoff victory through 15 seasons of its existence. The only previous playoff appearance was in 1999 in Atlanta, a sweep at the hands of the New York

Rangers.

SENATORS 1, CANADIENS 0

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Mike Hoffman scored midway through the third period as Ottawa beat Montreal to avoid playoffs elimination.

Craig Anderson made 28 saves to help the Senators' cut Montreal's lead to 3-1 in the Eastern Conference first-round series. Carey Price stopped 31 shots for the Canadiens.

Associated Press

Senators coach Dave Cameron moved Hoffman from the fourth line to the second unit with Mika Zibanejad and Bobby Ryan during the first period. It paid off in the third when Cody Ceci kept Tom Gilbert's clearing attempt in at the point and fed Hoffman in the left circle for quick shot that beat Price. Only four teams have come back to win when trailing 0-3 in a series: Toronto in 1942, the New York Islanders in 1975, Philadelphia in 2010 and Los Angeles in 2014.

Game 5 is Friday night in Montreal.

BLUES 6, WILD 1

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP) — Vladimir Tarasenko scored twice and the revived St. Louis Blues sent Minnesota goalie Devan Dubnyk to an early exit and thoroughly dominated the Wild to even the Western Conference quarterfinal series 2-2. Kevin Shattenkirk had three assists and Jake Allen made 17 saves to help the Blues end a nine-game postseason road losing streak that lasted more than three years.

Patrik Berglund had a goal and an assist, and David Backes and Paul Stastny scored for the first time in the series. □

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Yankees pounce early to win 13-4 at Detroit

The Associated Press
YANKEES 13, TIGERS 4

DETROIT (AP) — The New York Yankees scored six runs off Detroit ace David Price in the first inning amid swirling snow flurries, and Mark Teixeira later added a three-run homer. Price (1-1) allowed eight runs and 10 hits in 2 1-3 innings, his second straight terrible start against the Yankees. Detroit has lost back-to-back games for the first time this season. Adam Warren (1-1) allowed four runs in the bottom of the first, walking four of the first five batters he faced, but he was fine after that. He ended up allowing five hits in 5 2-3 innings, and New York kept padding its lead. The Yankees (8-7) moved above .500 for the first time this year.

WHITE SOX 6, INDIANS 0
CHICAGO (AP) — Jeff Samardzija threw six shutout innings as the Chicago White Sox trounced Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber and the Cleveland Indians.

Jose Abreu homered for the second straight day. He hit a solo shot in the first inning and added a two-run double in the seventh to chase Kluber (0-2). Kluber gave up a career-high 13 hits and six earned runs. He struck out six, walked one and threw two wild pitches, and was pulled before he got an out in the seventh. Samardzija (1-1) faced the Indians for the first time in his career and allowed six hits, walked two and struck out three.

TWINS 3, ROYALS 0
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Mike Pelfrey pitched seven scoreless innings to pick up his first victory since 2013 as the Minnesota Twins beat Kansas City.

Joe Mauer reached base four times with two hits and two walks and scored a run. Pelfrey's last victory was Sept. 23, 2013, against Detroit. He went 0-3 in

five starts last year before undergoing season-ending elbow surgery on June 10. Pelfrey (1-0) gave up five singles, walked two, hit two batters and struck out four. Glen Perkins got three outs for his third save. Royals starter Jeremy Guthrie (0-1) gave up all three runs and six hits with a career high-tying six walks in five innings.

RAYS 7, RED SOX 5
ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Jake Elmore homered, Brandon Guyer had a two-run, pinch-hit single in a four-run sixth and the Tampa Bay Rays rallied from a four-run deficit to beat the Boston Red Sox. Elmore hit a solo shot off Edward Mujica (1-1) in his first at-bat after being promoted from Triple-A before the game. Brad Boxberger (1-1) struck out all three batters he faced in the seventh to help Tampa Bay stop a four-game skid. Steve Geltz pitched the ninth for his first career save.

Dustin Pedroia and David Ortiz homered for Boston.

BLUE JAYS 4, ORIOLES 2
TORONTO (AP) — Rookie Devon Travis got three hits, including a go-ahead home run that sent the Toronto Blue Jays over the Baltimore Orioles. Justin Smoak also connected for the Blue Jays, who have 21 homers this season. They are tied with the Yankees for most in the majors.

Aaron Sanchez (1-2) overcame seven walks in 5 1/3 innings as the Blue Jays posted back-to-back home wins for the first time this season. Brett Cecil got two outs in the eighth and Miguel Castro recorded four outs for his third save.

Travis hit a two-run homer in the fifth off Ubaldo Jimenez (1-1) that broke a 2-all tie.

MARINERS 3, ASTROS 2
SEATTLE (AP) — J.A. Happ earned his first win with the Mariners as the Seattle bullpen held off the Houston Astros.

Acquired from Toronto in an offseason trade, Happ (1-1) won in his third start. He gave up two runs and eight hits in 7 1-3 innings, walking none and striking out five. Reliever Yoervis Medina walked the bases loaded with two outs in the eighth before striking out Chris Carter.

An inning earlier, Carter homered. Fernando Rodney escaped a first-and-third, one-out jam in the ninth for his fourth save in five tries. Roberto Hernandez (0-2) allowed three runs in seven innings.

ATHLETICS 9, ANGELS 2
ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Sonny Gray outpitched Jered Weaver with seven innings of two-hit ball, and Billy Butler homered during a five-run seventh inning that carried the Oakland Athletics over the Los Angeles Angels.

Gray (2-0) struck out seven, escaped a bases-loaded jam in the third and retired his last 14 batters. The right-hander faced the Angels in three of his final eight starts last season, going at least seven innings each time. Eric Sogard greeted Fernando Salas (0-1) with a leadoff single in the seventh, stole second and advanced on Marcus Semien's sacrifice bunt before Stephen Vogt delivered the go-ahead run with a single through the right side off Cesar Ramos with one out and runners at the corners. □



New York Yankees' Chase Headley hits a two-run single as snow falls during the first inning of a baseball game against the Detroit Tigers, Wednesday, April 22, 2015, in Detroit.

Associated Press

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SUN & HOL 2:20 | 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20

Disney Nature Monkey Kingdom G
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-FRI 5:00 | 7:00
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SUN & HOL 3:00 | 5:00 | 7:00

PAUL BLART MALL COP 2 PG
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:40 | 6:50 | 9:10
FRI 4:40 | 6:50 | 9:10 | 11:20
SAT 2:30 | 4:40 | 6:50 | 9:10 | 11:20
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:40 | 6:50 | 9:10

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MON-THURS 9:00
FRI 9:00
SAT 9:00
SUN & HOL 9:00

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3D VERSION
MON-THURS 5:15 | 8:15
FRI 5:15 | 8:15 | 11:15
SAT 2:15 | 5:15 | 8:15 | 11:15
SUN & HOL 2:15 | 5:15 | 8:15
2D VERSION
MON-THURS 4:30 | 7:30
FRI 4:30 | 7:30 | 10:30
SAT 1:30 | 4:30 | 7:30 | 10:30
SUN & HOL 1:30 | 4:30 | 7:30

GET HARD R
MON-THURS 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35
FRI 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35 | 11:50
SAT 2:50 | 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:50 | 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35

HOME PG
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
3D VERSION
MON-THURS 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:40
FRI 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:40 | 10:50
SAT 2:10 | 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:40 | 10:50
SUN & HOL 2:10 | 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:40
2D VERSION
MON-THURS 5:30 | 7:40
FRI 5:30 | 7:40 | 9:50
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Duda, Flores lead Mets past Braves for 10th straight

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lucas Duda hit a tiebreaking single in the eighth inning that sent the New York Mets to their 10th straight win Wednesday night, 3-2 over the Atlanta Braves.

Wilmer Flores hit a tying homer and an RBI single for the Mets (12-3), on their longest winning streak since taking 10 straight in July 2008. Another victory in the series finale Thursday afternoon would match the team record of 11 in a row — last accomplished in 1990 — and complete a perfect 10-game run on their first homestand of the season.

Despite injuries to several key players, New York is off to its best start since the 1986 World Series champs opened 13-3.

Pinch-hitter Curtis Granderson drew a leadoff walk from Jim Johnson (1-1) in the eighth and went to third when Juan Lagares chopped a hit-and-run single through the right side. Duda singled to left for his latest clutch hit early this season.

Buddy Carlyle (1-0) retired dangerous pinch-hitter Jonny Gomes with two on, and Jeury Familia got three quick outs for his seventh save.

GIANTS 3, DODGERS 2

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Joe Panik hit a game-ending sacrifice fly after the Dodgers tried a five-man infield in the ninth inning, and the San Francisco Gi-



New York Mets center fielder Juan Lagares (12) makes a seventh-inning, over-the-shoulder catch on a flyout by Atlanta Braves Jace Peterson in a baseball game in New York, Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

ants edged Los Angeles. Reigning World Series MVP Madison Bumgarner and current NL Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw kept things close, dueling until it became a battle of the bullpens.

A single by Brandon Belt loaded the bases with one out, and prompted Dodgers manager Don Mattingly to argue that Giants third base coach Roberto Kelly improperly made contact and stopped pinch-runner Gregor Blanco at the bag. Panik then delivered a long fly off J.P. Howell that easily scored the winning run.

Santiago Casilla (1-0) pitched out of a jam with two runners on in the ninth. Buster Posey hit a one-out

single off Chris Hatcher (0-2) to set up the deciding run.

DIAMONDBACKS 8, RANGERS 5

PHOENIX (AP) — Archie Bradley shook off a shaky start to pitch six effective innings, lifting the Arizona Diamondbacks over Texas. Bradley (2-0) walked five in the first three innings, including one that scored a run, but proved to be effectively wild, holding the Rangers to a run and two hits.

Bradley held his own in his first two big league starts, beating reigning NL Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw and outpitching World Series MVP Madison Bumgarner in a no-de-

cision.

Chris Owings homered off Yovani Gallardo (2-1) and had a run-scoring single.

REDS 2, BREWERS 1

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Billy Hamilton dashed home on a two-out wild pitch in the ninth inning and the Cincinnati Reds sent Milwaukee to its eighth straight loss.

Hamilton scored both runs for Cincinnati, which won its third straight game against Milwaukee. The Brewers have the worst record in the majors at 2-13.

Johnny Cueto (1-2) gave up five hits and struck out eight in eight innings. Aroldis Chapman pitched the ninth for his fourth save.

Hamilton, who earlier stole his majors-leading ninth

base, drew a one-out walk in the ninth from Francisco Rodriguez (0-2). Hamilton took third on a single by Joey Votto and scored standing up on a pitch that bounced in the dirt and off the chest protector of catcher Martin Maldonado.

CARDINALS 7, NATIONALS 5

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kolten Wong homered and drove in the tiebreaking run with a double in the eighth inning to lift the St. Louis Cardinals over Washington. Wong had three hits and drove in three runs, and also made a pair of nifty plays at second base. His go-ahead hit came against Blake Treinen (0-2).

Kevin Siegrist (1-0) pitched 1 1-3 scoreless innings and Trevor Rosenthal got three outs for his fifth save. St. Louis won for the sixth time in seven games.

PIRATES 4, CUBS 3

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Gregory Polanco hit his first home run of the season and Vance Worley got through 5 2-3 shaky innings as the Pittsburgh Pirates held off the Chicago Cubs.

Polanco also doubled and made a fine running catch of a fly ball by rookie star Kris Bryant with the bases loaded.

Worley (2-1) allowed an unearned run. Tony Watson got six outs for his first save of the season and fifth of his five-year career.

Jason Hammel (1-1) took the loss. □

LANCE ARMSTRONG

Continued from page 17

Armstrong won the Tour de France every year from 1999-2005. Those titles were stripped after a massive report in 2012 by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency detailed doping by Armstrong and his U.S. Postal Service teammates. In the email, Howman said he told Armstrong's attorneys months earlier they should meet with USADA.

Although the intent of the meeting request with Howman is not relayed in emails,



In this Aug. 29, 2012, file photo, Lance Armstrong listens at the World Cancer Congress in Montreal. Associated Press

Armstrong said Wednesday he reached out to Howman in hopes of discussing a potential "truth and reconciliation" effort to confront doping in cycling.

A probe into the sport's doping problems was later conducted by the Cycling Independent Reform Commission, which met twice with Armstrong and issued its report in March.

Part of the report detailed Armstrong's efforts to debunk a report by the French newspaper L'Equipe that found his urine samples from the 1999 Tour de France tested positive for

EPO, a hormone that helps endurance. The UCI hired Dutch lawyer Emile Vrijman to investigate the findings and the probe produced a report that Vrijman claimed exonerated Armstrong and instead blamed WADA and the testing lab. The report released last month detailed how Armstrong's lawyers were allowed to help write the report that criticized WADA.

Armstrong said he doesn't know if he would have apologized to Howman had they met in 2013, but it would have been a chance to do it in person. □



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Drivers want new safety technology, but it will cost them

DEE-ANN DURBIN

AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Drivers want more collision-prevention technology in their cars, but there is a limit to how much they will pay.

Blind spot detection, night vision and collision avoidance systems — which automatically apply the brakes if the driver doesn't react in time — are the top three technologies drivers want on their next cars, according to a study released Wednesday by the consulting firm J.D. Power.

Drivers are much less excited about fuel-saving features, like solar roofs or active grille shutters, which open and close to improve aerodynamics. They also show little interest in wellness gadgets, like seats that measure your blood pressure, or sensors that let drivers use hand gestures to control the car's functions.

Navigation systems also weren't popular.

As the age of the driver goes up, the budget for new technology goes down. Generation Y buyers, who are 38 and younger, say they would spend

the most — an average of \$3,703 — for new technology. Generation X buyers would spend \$3,007, while Baby Boomers are willing to fork over \$2,416. Pre-Boomers, or those born before 1946, would spend \$2,067.

That might not be enough to get them all the features they want. High-tech safety features are often packaged together, and may only be available on more expensive trim levels.

To get blind spot detection and emergency automatic braking on the \$94,000 Mercedes-Benz S Class, for example, buyers must first upgrade to a \$4,500 premium package and then spend \$2,800 for a separate safety package. A night vision system, which uses sensors and heat-seeking cameras to warn drivers of obstacles in the road, is an extra \$2,260.

Prices are rapidly coming down, however, as cameras get cheaper and automakers spread out their costs by adding safety features to more and more models. Toyota said last month that automatic braking will be a \$300 to \$635 option on the 2016



In this April 2, 2015 file photo, the 2016 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid is presented at the New York International Auto Show in New York.

Associated Press

RAV4 SUV. Right now, the company offers automatic braking on the Prius hybrid, but only as part of a \$4,320 package.

For the study, which took place between January and March, J.D. Power asked 5,300 recent car buyers to rank 59 separate technologies. Some, like the wellness car seats or a

rear-mounted camera that projects images onto the rearview mirror, aren't yet commercially available. Another technology that appealed to respondents — a paint that repairs small scratches itself — is uncommon but available on a handful of models from Nissan, Infiniti and Lexus.

Kristin Kolodge, the execu-

tive director of driver interaction at J.D. Power, said prototype technologies were included in order to help automakers and suppliers decide what sorts of features to prioritize.

"The auto industry is standing on its head to keep technology up to consumers' new standards," Kolodge said. □

As PayPal split looms, eBay plans to think small

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — eBay plans to grow by thinking small as it prepares for life apart from PayPal.

The company says it is focusing on getting more people, as well as small- to mid-size businesses, to buy and sell items on its popular online marketplace.

The effort comes as it attempts to address investor concerns about how it will fare later this year after it spins off its PayPal payments division, which has

long been eBay's fastest-growing segment.

CEO John Donahoe said Wednesday the company is moving toward the spinoff with "clarity and speed." eBay's first-quarter earnings may have mitigated investors' concern somewhat. The results beat expectations and revenue, excluding the impact of the stronger dollar, grew in both segments. A stronger dollar cuts into revenue generated overseas when it's translated back into dol-

lars. "We are deeply committed to setting up eBay and PayPal to succeed and to deliver sustainable value to our shareholders," Donahoe said. The e-commerce company is seeking to reinvigorate its marketplace business, which includes the e-commerce arm of eBay. It stumbled last year when it had to deal with a change in Google's algorithms that made eBay products come up in search results less often. □



This July 16, 2013 file photo shows an eBay sign at eBay headquarters in San Jose, Calif. eBay plans to grow by thinking small as it prepares for life apart from PayPal.

Associated Press

Report: Comcast plans to drop \$45B Time Warner Cable bid

TALI ARBEL

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Comcast is abandoning its \$45.2 billion purchase of Time Warner Cable, according to media reports. Bloomberg News and The New York Times both said Thursday that the cable company is planning to drop the bid after pushback from regulators. They both cited unidentified

people with knowledge of the matter.

Comcast may make an announcement as soon as Friday, Bloomberg said.

Comcast and Time Warner Cable declined to comment.

Combining the No. 1 and No. 2 U.S. cable companies would put nearly 30 percent of TV and about 55 percent of broadband subscribers under one

roof. That would give the resulting behemoth unprecedented power over what Americans watch and download.

That has had competitors, consumer groups, and Senators lining up to oppose the deal.

"This is one of those deals where the opponents of the merger have been one of the most vocal I can remember," said S&P

Capital IQ Tuna Amobi.

One concern, for example, is that the company could undermine the streaming video industry by requiring onerous payments from new online-only video providers for connecting to its network. Dish, the satellite TV company behind the new Web video service Sling TV, and Netflix are opposed to the deal.

Another charge is that Comcast hasn't stuck to conditions imposed on it when it bought NBCUniversal. The company says it has, except for one circumstance when the FCC found it wasn't promoting a stand-alone Internet service. Comcast says it fixed that.

Pushback against the merger has picked up in the last couple weeks. □

Wall Street inches up; Nasdaq sets record high

KEN SWEET

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Fifteen years, one month and thirteen days.

That's how long it took the Nasdaq composite index to close above the record it set at the apex of the dot-com bubble.

The Nasdaq rose 20.89 points, or 0.4 percent, to 5,056.06, above the record of 5,048.62 it set on March 10, 2000. In many ways, the crossing of that threshold is purely ceremonial and psychological.

The index, while still weighted with technology and Internet companies, has not been defined by the like of Pets.com, Geocities or WebVan for a decade and a half.

Apple, a company that was teetering on the edge in 2000, is now the biggest and most profitable company on the planet and makes up a significant piece of the Nasdaq. Google, which didn't exist as a public company in 2000, also makes up a notable percentage of the

index.

And the Standard & Poor's 500, which most fund managers use as a benchmark for the overall stock market, recovered from its dot-

market on Thursday.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 20.42 points, 0.1 percent, to 18,058.69. The S&P 500 rose 4.97 points, or 0.2 percent, to 2,112.93. The



Market data is displayed on the screens at the Nasdaq MarketSite in New York, Thursday, April 23, 2015. The Nasdaq composite has closed at a record high for the first time since the dot-com bubble of 2000. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

com peak in 2007.

"It's a major psychological barrier, but in the end, it's just a number," said Scott Wren, senior global equity strategist at Wells Fargo Advisors.

The Nasdaq's advance was part of a broader move higher by the stock

S&P 500 is about four points below the record high it set March 2.

The Nasdaq's close was a side attraction for many professional investors, who have been focused on companies that have been reporting their quarterly earnings and how the

strong U.S. dollar has been having a negative impact on U.S. companies that rely a lot on overseas sales.

3M, General Motors, Procter & Gamble and Caterpillar all reported their earnings on Thursday and all said the strong U.S. dollar hurt them.

P&G, which makes Tide detergent and Gillette razors, said its profits were down roughly 7 percent and sales were down 8 percent from a year earlier. The company blamed a strong U.S. dollar, which makes its products more expensive when sold abroad. P&G fell \$1.48, or 2 percent, to \$80.95.

Another consumer products company, 3M, also reported lower profits due to the dollar. The maker of Post-Its and Scotch Tape fell \$5.01, or 3 percent, to \$159.66.

While Caterpillar reported a better-than-expected profit for last quarter, the construction equipment maker said it may face bigger issues later this year as long as the dollar remains

strong. Caterpillar fell 8 cents to \$84.79.

"The results have been pretty consistent this earnings season. If you're an export-heavy company, your results have suffered from a strong dollar," said Randy Frederick, managing director of trading and derivatives for Charles Schwab.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil rose \$1.58, or 2.8 percent, to close at \$57.74 a barrel in New York. The advance helped lift energy stocks, which gained 1 percent. Brent crude rose \$2.12 to close at \$64.85 a barrel in London. Oil has been recovering slowly from low levels it hit in March, which investors have taken as a sign that prices are starting to stabilize after a year of declines. In other trading of energy futures on the New York Mercantile Exchange, wholesale gasoline rose 7.1 cents to \$1.997 a gallon, heating oil gained 5.3 cents to \$1.924 a gallon and natural gas fell 7.5 cents to \$2.531 per 1,000 cubic feet. □

Google posts mixed 1Q results amid threats to company

MICHAEL LIEDTKE

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google has been looking more vulnerable as a technological upheaval nibbles at its dominance in Internet search, while the company also deals with a potentially massive regulatory headache in Europe. But those threats haven't done much to undercut Google's power or profits yet.

Google's first-quarter earnings rose 4 percent to \$3.6 billion as the company's Internet-leading advertising network lifted revenue by 14 percent to \$17.3 billion from the same time last year. If not for employee stock compensation, Google said it would have earned \$6.57 per share, four cents below the estimates among analysts polled by FactSet. Revenue, minus ad commis-

sions, totaled \$13.9 billion — about \$100 million below analysts' predictions. It marked the sixth consecutive quarter that Google's earnings have fallen below the analysts' targets that shape investors' expectations. Google's stock nevertheless surged \$14.54, or nearly 3 percent, to \$572 in extended trading.

The earnings miss stemmed from several factors, including a stronger dollar

that depressed overseas revenue and Google's penchant for spending heavily on far-flung projects such as driverless cars, medical research and Internet-beaming balloons that may take years to pay off, if ever. Google CEO Larry Page believes investing in risky projects that he calls "moonshots" will produce breakthroughs that turn into the company's next big moneymaker

while helping make people's lives better, too.

Even as Google sows new fields, the company finds itself trying to adapt to an era of smartphones that is changing the way that people find information and peruse digital content. Millions of different mobile applications have enabled people to go directly to the digital content that they want, instead of searching on Google. □

Granny Get Your Gun



MAUREEN DOWD

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WASHINGTON - The most famous woman on the planet has a confounding problem. She can't figure out how to campaign as a woman.

In 2008, Hillary Clinton took advice from two men - Bill Clinton and Mark Penn - and campaigned like a man. Worried about proving she could be commander in chief, Hillary scrubbed out the femininity, vulnerability and heart, in image and issues, that were anathema to Penn. Consciously tamping down the humor and warmth in Hillary and playing up the muscularity and bellicosity, her strategist modeled Hillary on Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher.

"In analyzing the current situation, regardless of the sex of the candidates, most voters in essence see the presidents as the 'father' of the country," Penn wrote in a memo. "They do not want someone who would be the first mama, especially in this kind of world."

Trying to project swagger, she followed her husband's advice and voted to authorize the Iraq War without bothering to read the unpersuasive National Intelligence Estimate - a move that she now surely knows helped cost her the election. Bill Clinton's philosophy after 9/11, as Jeff Gerth and Don Van Natta Jr. reported in their book, "Her Way," was encapsulated in what he told a group of Democrats in 2003: "When people feel uncertain, they'd rather have someone who's strong and wrong than somebody who's weak and right."

Hillary followed this maxim on the day of the war vote in the Senate when, as Gerth wrote last year in ProPublica, she "went further than any other Democratic senator - and aligned herself with President Bush - by accusing Saddam Hussein of giving 'aid, comfort and sanctuary to terrorists, including al-Qaida.'" Gerth asserts that Clinton's aversion to the subject of Iraq kept her from engaging fully as the nation's top diplomat during the period when Iraq was crumbling and the Islamic State was rising.

Hillary saw the foolishness of acting like a masculine woman defending the Iraq invasion after she fell behind to a feminized man denouncing it. After losing Iowa and watching New Hampshire slip away to the tyro, Barack Obama, Hillary cracked. She misted up, talking to a group of voters in New Hampshire when a woman asked her how she kept going, while staying "upbeat and so wonderful."

Her aides thought the flash of tears would be a disaster, that she would seem weak. But it was a triumph because she seemed real. As The Washington Post's Dan Balz

wrote in his campaign book, it "let a glimmer of her humanity peek through."

Hillary always overcorrects. Now she has zagged too far in the opposite direction, presenting herself as a sweet, docile granny in a Scooby van, so self-effacing she made only a cameo in her own gauzy, demographically pandering presidential campaign announcement video and mentioned no issues on her campaign's website.

In her Iowa round tables, she acted as though she were following dating tips from 1950s advice columnists to women trying to "trap" a husband: listen a lot, nod a lot, widen your eyes, and act fascinated with everything that's said. A clip posted on her campaign Facebook page showed her sharing the story of the day her granddaughter was born with some Iowa voters, basking in estrogen as she emoted about the need for longer paid leave for new mothers: "You've got to learn how to take care of the baby."

She and her fresh team of No-Drama ex-Obama advisers think that this humility tour will move her past the hilarious caricature by Kate McKinnon on "Saturday Night Live" of Hillary as a manipulative, clawing robot who has coveted the role as leader of the free world for decades. But isn't there a more authentic way for Hillary to campaign as a woman - something between an overdose of testosterone and an overdose of estrogen, something between Macho Man and Humble Granny?

Tina Fey and Amy Poehler showed the way in 2008, deploring the sexism against Hillary and hailing her as the unapologetically tough chick. It was a precursor to her cool "Don't mess with me" Tumblr meme, showing her with dark glasses serenely checking her BlackBerry on a military plane. "Bitches get stuff done," Fey proclaimed in a "Weekend Update" segment on "Saturday Night Live" that ended with, "Bitch is the new black."

In one skit, Amy as Hillary described how she would battle Big Oil: "It's going to take a fighter, not a talker, someone who is aggressive enough and relentless enough and demanding enough to take them on. Someone so annoying, so pushy, so grating, so bossy and shrill, with a personality so unpleasant, that at the end of the day the special interests will have to go 'Enough! We give up! Life is too short to deal with this awful woman! Just give her what she wants so she'll shut up and leave us in peace.' And I think the American people will agree, that someone is me."

As she hits the trail again, Hillary is a blur of competing images, a paean to the calibrated, artful and generic, a low-key lady who doesn't stand for anything except low-keyness. She has seen, over and over, that overcorrecting can be self-defeating for her and parlous to the nation, but she keeps doing it.

Let's hope that the hokey Chipotle Granny will give way to the cool Tumblr Chick in time to teach her Republican rivals - who are coming after her with every condescending, misogynist, distorted thing they've got - that bitch is still the new black. □



Peering Through The Haze



JOE NOCERA

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They sure know how to bury the lead at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

On Thursday last week, the CDC issued its annual National Youth Tobacco Survey; the headline in the accompanying news release read: "E-cigarette use triples among middle and high school students in just one year."

This was, indeed, true. In 2014, according to the survey results, 13.4 percent of high school students had used an electronic cigarette at least once during the month the survey was taken. That was up from 4.5 percent in 2013.

In a conference call with reporters, Tom Frieden, the director of the CDC, couldn't stop talking about how awful this was. "It's important that everyone, parents and kids, understand that nicotine is dangerous for kids at any age, whether it's an e-cigarette, hookah, cigarette or a cigar," he said. In addition to being addictive, nicotine was thought to affect the still-maturing adolescent brain - although Frieden also acknowledged that this had mainly been shown in animal studies, rather than studies of adolescents.

What's more, he feared that there was a "significant likelihood that a proportion of those who are using

e-cigarettes will go on to use combustible cigarettes."

"That this is happening," Frieden added, "is alarming."

And yet buried in the news release - and played down by Frieden and others at the CDC - was an astonishing fact. Actual cigarette smoking - the kind that requires inhaling carcinogens, that kills 1 out of every 2 long-term smokers and that public health officials have been trying to eradicate for decades - that kind of smoking has dropped to a mere 9.2 percent among teens.

That is a 25 percent drop in a year, a nearly 42 percent drop since 2011 - and the first time that teen smoking in America has ever hit single digits. That sure sounds like big news to me.

In fact, to take it a step further, it seems pretty obvious that the decline in cigarette smoking has largely been caused by the rising popularity of e-cigarettes. This, too, was denied by Frieden. But as David Sweanor, a tobacco policy expert at the University of Ottawa, put it to me: "What other huge interventions have there been? It's not like there has been a big new cigarette tax, or tough new package warnings. The only thing that is new is the introduction of e-cigarettes."

As for the notion that e-cigarettes will inevitably lead teenagers to take up real cigarettes, no one has ever produced any evidence of this so-called "gateway" effect. On the contrary, the CDC's own survey would seem to refute it rather convincingly.

"It appears that rather than serving as a gateway toward cigarette smoking, e-cigarettes may actually be acting as a diversion away from cigarettes," wrote Michael Siegel, a professor at Boston University School of Public Health, on his anti-tobacco blog. "This is actually a good thing."

It's not even all that clear how addictive e-cigarettes are. On Wednesday, BMJ Open, an online scientific journal, published a study of the e-cigarette habits

of Welsh adolescents. It found that nearly 13 percent of the secondary schoolers had tried e-cigarettes. But, as BMJ summarized the research, "few of those who try them become regular users." Graham Moore, one of the study's authors, told me that "widespread experimentation with e-cigarettes doesn't seem to be translating into addiction."

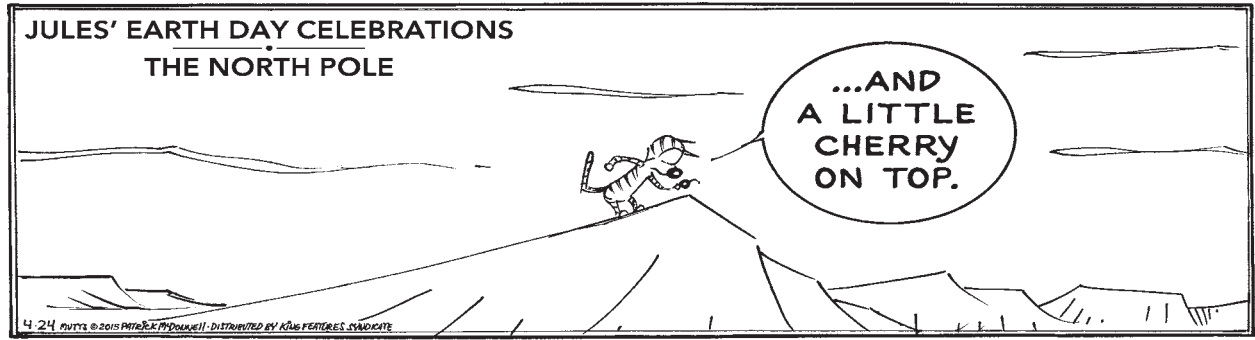
In the Times story about the survey, my colleague Sabrina Tavernise interviewed high school kids who had taken up e-cigarettes. Some of them were using it as "a medicine against cigarettes." But others were trying them because they looked "cool," or they liked the flavors.

It is easy enough to understand why such a story might cause public health officials to shudder. It conjures up the bad old days when Big Tobacco used its marketing tricks to convince teens to try smoking because it was cool - after which they were hooked, often for life, with terrible consequences.

Yes, teens are better off if they never inhale nicotine. But equating smoking cigarettes with inhaling e-cigarettes, as the CDC is doing in its messaging around teen tobacco use, is a huge disservice to public health. On the scale of potential harms, e-cigarettes aren't even in the same ballpark as combustible cigarettes. They have the potential to save millions of lives if smokers could be convinced to switch - which is what the CDC ought to be stressing. Jack Henningfield, a tobacco expert at Pinney Associates, told me that while youths should be discouraged from using nicotine, "putting electronic products in the same basket as cigarettes is not truthful, credible or helpful."

Invariably, teens do things they shouldn't; that's part of growing up. For decades, smoking cigarettes has been one of those things. The fact that they are doing less of it than ever before is not a cause for dismay. It is a cause for celebration. □

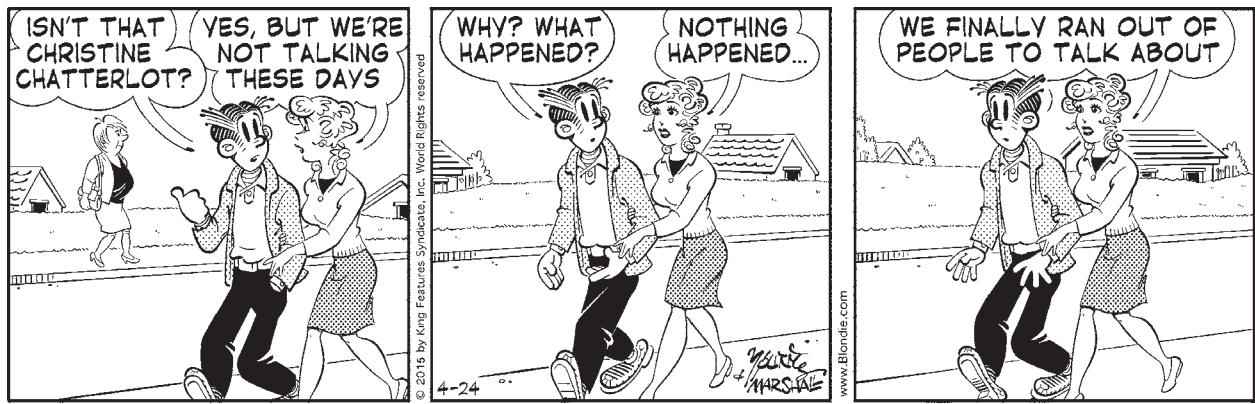
Mutts



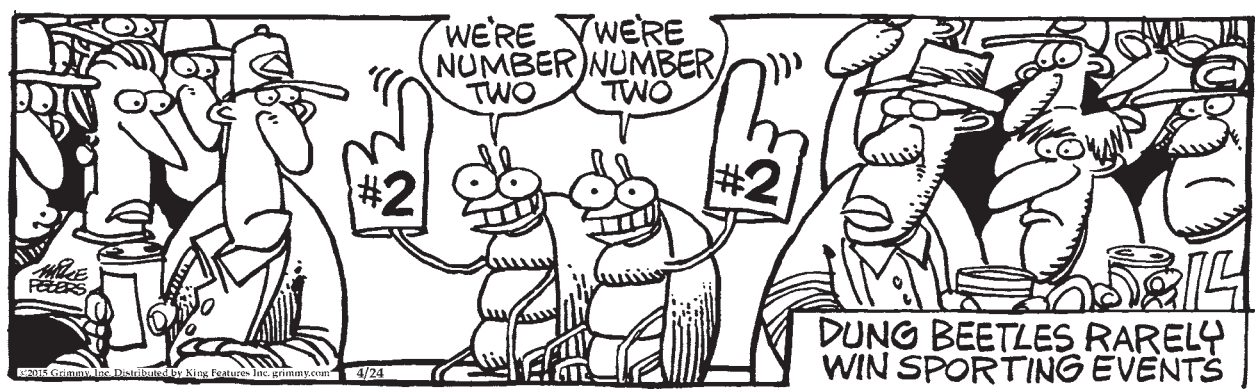
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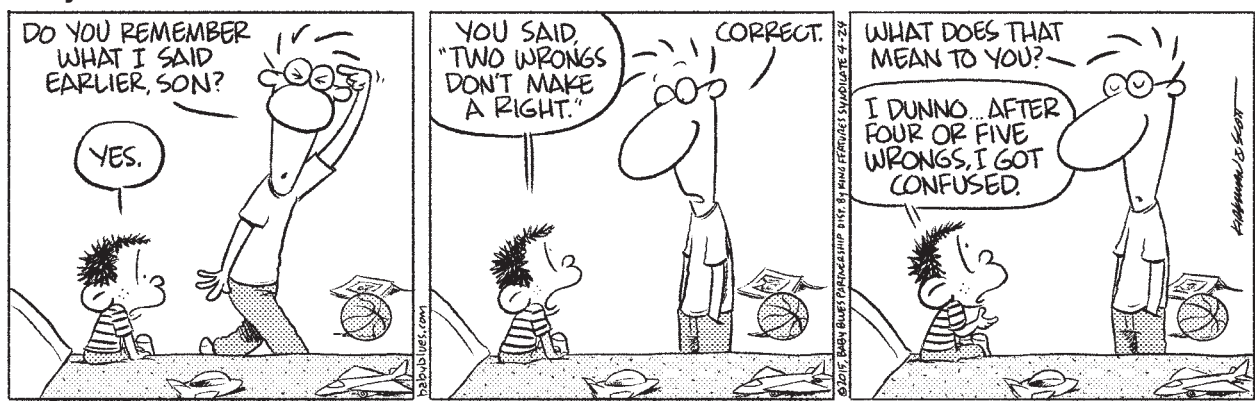
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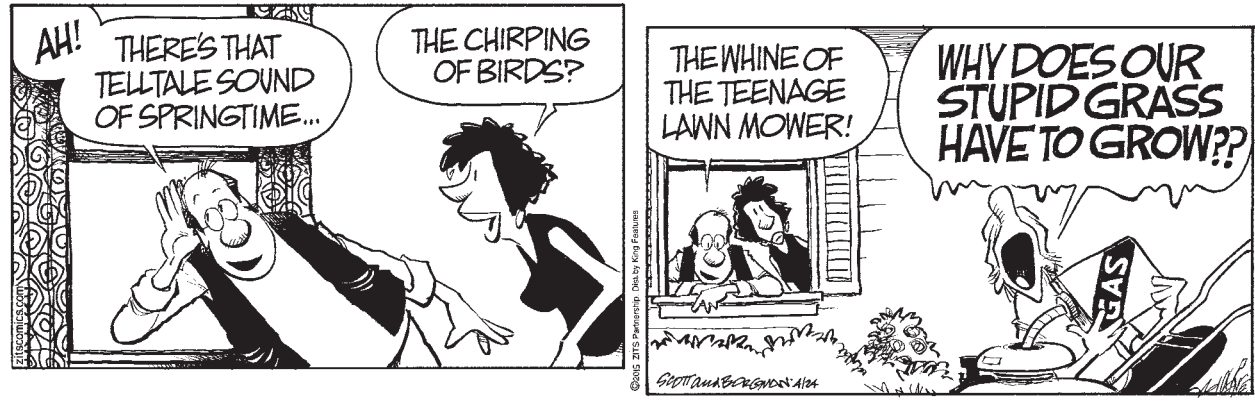
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	7	4		9		2		1
6					7		4	
1								8
					6		8	
2								5
	1		3					
9								4
	8		9					2
3		5		4		6	7	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

4/24

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

6	2	4	1	3	5	9	7	8
8	1	7	4	9	6	3	5	2
5	9	3	7	8	2	1	4	6
9	7	5	2	6	4	8	1	3
3	8	2	5	1	9	7	6	4
1	4	6	3	7	8	5	2	9
2	5	1	9	4	3	6	8	7
4	6	9	8	5	7	2	3	1
7	3	8	6	2	1	4	9	5

- ACROSS
- 1 Cafe's list
 - 5 Radiant
 - 10 Encourage
 - 14 Hail Marys, for short
 - 15 Groom's love
 - 16 Lowly laborer
 - 17 Spouse
 - 18 Numskull
 - 20 ___ Wednesday; start of Lent
 - 21 In a ___; melancholy
 - 22 Has in hand
 - 23 Kick out
 - 25 ___ and vinegar; salad dressing
 - 26 Brussels ___; green veggie
 - 28 Property damager
 - 31 Carrying a gun
 - 32 Egypt's capital
 - 34 Pigeon's sound
 - 36 Dairy cries
 - 37 Rates of speed
 - 38 Flat-bottomed boat
 - 39 Koch & Ames
 - 40 Made angry
 - 41 ___ up; make a mess of things
 - 42 Leisurely walk
 - 44 Smiled broadly
 - 45 Foamy drink
 - 46 Japanese 3-line verse
 - 47 TV's ___ Mandel
 - 50 Koppel & Wass
 - 51 Retriever, for short
 - 54 Modest
 - 57 Leaf-gathering tool
 - 58 A's followers
 - 59 Portion
 - 60 "___ better to give than to receive"
 - 61 Notices
 - 62 Deadly viper
 - 63 ___ up; confined

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17				18					19			
20				21					22			
23				24					25			
26				27					28			
29				30					31			
32				33					34			
35				36					37			
38				39					40			
41				42					43			
44				45					46			
47				48					49			
50				51					52			
53				54					55			
56				57					58			
59				60					61			
62				63					64			

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

4/24/15

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

MAR	ALLOR	GLUM
OWES	TOILE	AURA
WEAK	TALES	EGGS
DRAMATIST	LEES	
TECH	ALI	
SHRIEK	DETACHED	
POINT	FIXED	ALE
RUNG	LIVED	ABOUT
ASS	HIRES	GUIDE
TEENAGER	DUSTER	
ATA	JEST	
CHIC	MONASTERY	
RUTH	EVAS	ROUT
ALSO	NEVER	ETCH
BAAS	TRYST	SKY

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4/24/15

- 41 Luau neckwear
- 43 Elevates
- 44 Pester; annoy
- 46 Therefore
- 47 Wheel centers
- 48 ___ in a while; occasionally
- 49 Get just one's feet wet
- 50 ___ up; bound
- 52 ___ to; like
- 53 Finest
- 55 ___ creek; in trouble
- 56 Prefix for night or section
- 57 ___ up; shred

Mets

Continued from page 8

"It's almost like a nagging injury and once in a while you get out of bed the wrong way and you start hurting," Freund, 33, said. Alejandro, 30, took a shot at the Yankees. "They're an old team," he said. "They're going down and we're going up." Then, overcome with a surge of emotion, he exclaimed, "Yeah, we're gonna crush 'em!"

The three chuckled awkwardly, as if they had allowed themselves a thrilling, unfamiliar thought.

The restraint is understandable. Against the Yankees' 27 World Series championships, the Mets have only two. The Yankees have had winning records in a vast majority of their seasons, the Mets in fewer than half. In head-to-head matchups, the Yankees have won most of the games, including beating the Mets four games to one when the teams met in the 2000 World Series.

The strange flush of victory sweeping Mets Nation is not so much new as renewed. Mets fans will argue that their team ruled New York in the late 1980s, winning a World Series championship in 1986.

But that was eons ago to long-suffering Mets fans, who have largely been forced to settle for second-class citizenship in a Yankees town.

"It seems like a lifetime," Somers, the WFAN host, said. The last several years in particular, he said, have been akin to "a famine." Still, some fans have worn that also-ran status as a badge of honor, their durable allegiance during tough times a sign of true loyalty.

Jasmine Lee, 37 - a Mets fan "by osmosis" through her father, she said - contended that supporting the team year in and year out was a test of character reflecting the very determination, uniqueness and grit that characterized the city. □

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Scientists: Over 143M Americans live in quake-prone areas

ALICIA CHANG
AP Science Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — More than 143 million people in the mainland states now live on shaky ground, earthquake scientists say. That's because more people have moved into the quake-prone West Coast and some quake zones were recently expanded, according to researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey.

The research didn't include Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, but scientists using older data estimated that nearly half of Americans — or 150 million people — live in earthquake regions.

About 28 million people face the highest threat, mostly along the West Coast where the San An-

dra Fault cuts through California and a huge undersea fault lurks off the Pacific Northwest.

The latest calculations by the USGS, Federal Emergency Management Agency and California Geological Survey were reported Wednesday at a Seismological Society of America meeting in Pasadena.

There have been a few previous attempts to figure out how many people live in quake-prone areas. A federal estimate two decades ago found that 75 million people in 39 states were at risk of shaking.

The USGS last year updated its national earthquake maps that increased the quake danger for one-third of the country. While the



In this Jan. 17, 1994 file photo, the covered body of Los Angeles Police Officer Clarence Wayne Dean, 46, lies near his motorcycle which plunged off the State Highway 14 overpass that collapsed onto Interstate 5, after a magnitude-6.7 Northridge earthquake.

Associated Press



Pacific coast remains a seismic hotspot, other regions as the Rockies, Midwest, New England and parts of the Southeast also face an elevated risk.

"The distribution of earthquake risk is much broader and wider beyond the West Coast," lead researcher and USGS contractor Kishor Jaiswal said in an email. The new work focused on the Lower 48 states because scientists don't yet have updated maps for the whole country. Researchers didn't take into account regions where small earthquakes have been caused by oil and gas drilling. If

those were included, the number of people exposed to shaking would be higher, Jaiswal said.

The team also calculated potential economic losses from damaged buildings such as homes, hospitals, schools and fire stations. The average loss amounted to \$4.5 billion with the greatest financial hit to California, Oregon and Washington.

"We've always been told that we should be prepared. But this study puts some teeth into the recommendation," said USGS seismologist Sue Hough who

had no connection to the research.

Government scientists have been testing a West Coast seismic alert system designed to detect the initial shock waves from a large jolt, calculate the strength and give a few seconds of warning before the arrival of slower, damaging waves.

Supporters say an early warning system would allow trains to stop, companies to shut off gas lines and people to duck under a table until the shaking stops. Only select scientists and companies currently receive the alerts. □

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Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans set the stage for a Civil War

LINDSEY BAHR

AP Film Writer

BURBANK, Calif. (AP) —

There's a conflict brewing in "Avengers: Age of Ultron," and it doesn't involve megalomaniac robots. After reaching a peace with their structure and roles on the superhero fighting team, Tony Stark/Iron Man and Steve Rogers/Captain America have begun to clash ideologically.

The stoic Steve, still reeling from revelations of widespread corruption in "The Winter Soldier," is starting to question the precepts he's followed blindly for so long. Tony, meanwhile, is drifting toward the desire for order and control.

"Morality hits Tony, humanity hits Tony. All of a sudden he feels responsible," said Chris Evans, who plays Rogers for the fourth time in the billion dollar Marvel franchise.

"Neither one of them are blindly convicted. It's blurry and that's what makes it great. No one's right, no one's wrong," said Evans in a recent joint interview with Robert Downey Jr., back for a fifth turn as Stark.

"It's going to make it even harder for them to come to an agreement, which I'm really excited about," said Downey.

While the seeds of a fight are scattered throughout "Ultron," the second gathering of the "Avengers" on the big screen out May 1, it's also setting the stage for next year's "Captain America: Civil War." Plot details are sparse, but any casual comics fan knows that "Civil War" is where the "Avengers" fracture, divided down lines set by Tony and Steve.

It's also the only upcoming Marvel film for which Downey and Evans have been confirmed.

"It's like a marriage," said Evans. "We love each other but it's explosive. You're working toward the same goal but you have very different approaches to it."

Added Downey: "I'm really stoked to see when we



This photo provided by Disney/Marvel shows, Chris Evans as Captain America/Steve Rogers, in the new film, "Avengers: Age Of Ultron." The movie releases in U.S. theaters on May 1, 2015.

Associated Press

have more stuff to actually do together besides like act like we're about to have a fight one day."

Off-screen, the dynamic is, of course, a bit more polite. Sitting on a patio at the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, Downey and Evans were calm and casual with each other.

When Evans tried to explain how others on set are more talented and smarter than he is, Downey quickly jumped in to offer some reassurance.

"I have stood toe to toe with some of the greatest folks of all time and if Spencer Tracy is right — you know, hit your mark and tell the truth — nobody that I've worked with does it the way that (Evans does)," said Downey.

"God. I tinkled a little bit," laughed Evans in response. As with the rest of the "Avengers" actors, Evans is

downright deferential in the presence of Downey. He made sure to immediately stress Downey's essential contributions to creating Marvel's Avenger world. In 2008, the success of "Iron Man" laid the foundation for what is now one of the most influential series in the industry.

"None of this would have happened without Downey," said Evans, who went on to compare him to "The Godfather."

"Success has many masters. It's fun taking all the credit, but the only part of it that's true is that I put points on the board for a team that didn't even know it was going to be a team," said Downey.

"Ultron" isn't even in domestic theaters yet, but pre-production is already underway on a summer shoot for "Civil War," with "Winter Soldier" directors

came on to produce the films, none have made under \$600 million worldwide. With a slate that extends through 2019, the studios are betting hard on the continued appeal and evolution of Marvel's universe.

"Some people say there's going to be superhero exhaustion. But these movies aren't just superhero movies," said Evans. "The superhero involvement is what's going to bring the audiences because of the familiar properties but then you get into the movie and it's not just him and his suit, it's not just me and my shield. It's people having real life discussions and real life conflicts as characters, that's what people are



This photo provided by Disney/Marvel shows, Robert Downey Jr. as Iron Man/Tony Stark in the film, "Avengers: Age Of Ultron." The movie releases in U.S. theaters on May 1, 2015.

Associated Press

Joe and Anthony Russo at the helm. In the big business of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, there's no waiting to see how "Ultron" performs before greenlighting future projects.

Both "The Avengers" and "Iron Man 3" made over \$1 billion at the global box office. And, since Disney

going to relate to." Downey agreed, but with a provision.

"What will happen is it will change," he said. "I'm just stoked that we get to be still doing this at the point where it's representative of what it is. It kind of drives the industry." □

E L James' husband to pen 'Fifty Shades' sequel

NEW YORK (AP) — The "Fifty Shades of Grey" sequel will be a family affair.

A spokeswoman for Universal Pictures confirmed Thursday that the husband of E L James, Niall Leonard, will write the script for the follow-up to the global hit.

Leonard is also a published author. He has written for several British TV shows, including "Air Force One Is Down" and "Wire in the Blood."

Kelly Marcel penned the original adaptation but isn't returning. Also not returning

is director Sam Taylor-Johnson, whose disputes with James were well-known.

"Fifty Shades of Grey" made \$568.8 million worldwide.

The Hollywood Reporter first reported Leonard's involvement in the sequel. □



In this April 29, 2012 file photo, author E L James holds a copy of her new book "Fifty Shades of Grey" at a book signing in Coral Gables, Fla.

Associated Press

S.F. symphony wins younger fans with hip nightclub

OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A Vegas-style nightclub with high-tech light and sound, video screens and several stages has become San Francisco's hottest venue for classical music.

SoundBox is the San Francisco Symphony's latest effort to attract a younger audience as it faces dwindling ticket sales and an average attendee age of over 60. With sold out performances that mix traditional and modern sounds in a casual, tech-friendly atmosphere, many say the city's symphony just hit the right note.

The nightclub built inside a cavernous rehearsal hall behind the imposing Davies Symphony Hall offers an alternative to the traditional concert hall experience. It's a space in which the audience and musicians can explore a huge swath of music, said Michael Tilson Thomas, the San Francisco Symphony's music director.

"Defying expectations of a standard concert experience is really what this space is all about," said Brent Assink, the symphony's executive director.

On a recent evening, the nightclub, with high ceilings, bare walls and worn



Percussionist Raymond Froehlich performs at SoundBox on Friday, April 10, 2015, in San Francisco. Associated Press

floors, was a lot like a trendy venue with the 20 and 30-something crowd mingling, lounging on comfy ottomans or sitting at high tables and talking by candlelight.

When the music started, the room fell silent and the audience was soon engrossed by two of the symphony's veteran percussionists who opened with a 12-minute tinkling piece on crotales, or antique cymbals, accompanied by a digital sound.

Musicians perform in casual clothes instead of tails or black gowns and the audience attends wearing bow ties, fedora hats or hooded sweatshirts and jeans. Mobile device use is encouraged. And instead of receiving a printed program, attendees can learn more about the performance by downloading the club's app.

SoundBox has a full bar in the back serving fancy cocktails and gourmet finger foods that stays open

throughout the performance.

Despite the club atmosphere and a recent sell-out crowd of 450, many of them in standing room only, the performance felt intimate with many attendees sitting on cushions a few feet away from the performers.

"Sometimes we get used to our technology. We're so used to our iPads and our iPods and DJ music and you forget that all this started with these percussions,

and strings and drums," said Nishat Jannah, a 30-year-old hairstylist from San Francisco who has attended two performances. "It's fascinating to have a venue where you can feel at home and have something different," Jannah said. With its stages backed by video screens, the SoundBox uses technology to draw in the audience, opening each performance with a short video presentation. The venue also takes into account the shorter attention spans of the younger generations and the two-hour productions include two leisurely intermissions. The symphony's first four-month season at the club, which included nine performances and ended in April, was sold out, in part due to tickets selling at \$25.

"I was 10 feet (3 meters) away from people who are rocking these instruments and you appreciate (the music) more as opposed to seeing them from normally where I would be, back in the balcony because that's what I could afford pricewise," said Nathan Ornell, 24. Here "you can see the sweat in their face and how passionate they are."

The second season starts in December. □



In this April 21, 2015 photo, actress Edie Falco poses for a portrait on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 in Los Angeles. Associated Press

NICOLE EVATT

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In 2007, Edie Falco said goodbye to her critically acclaimed series "The Sopranos" in one of the most

divisive, talked-about finales on television. As she prepares to bid farewell to her addiction dramedy "Nurse Jackie," Falco isn't feeling any pressure to deliver another controversial ending.

Edie Falco embraces uncertainty after 'Nurse Jackie'

"This whole thing about finale episodes, I don't know. I tend not to get too caught up in it," Falco said in an interview Tuesday. "In a perfect world it lives up to all that you've come to expect in the show. I feel very much that it does."

"I'm proud of it," she said of the June 28 finale. "It feels honest."

Falco stars as Jackie Peyton, an ER nurse addicted to prescription drugs, on the Showtime series (Sunday, 9 p.m. EDT). The final season finds Jackie attempting to piece her career and family back together after a re-

lapse and DUI arrest.

After seven seasons, Falco, 51, is at peace with "Nurse Jackie" ending, but saying goodbye was difficult.

"The final day on set was emotional. It was awful actually," she said. "You try to be good about it, but there was a lot of crying."

However, the Emmy-winning actress is thrilled to have more time with her children, Anderson, 10, and Macy, 7.

"First and foremost I'm getting to have a home life," she said. "I want to be there for the stuff as they're reading and singing and doing

gymnastics and making new friends. It's all important. It's all very important stuff for me."

Falco is sifting through television and film scripts and contemplating a return to theater.

"We're walking into the unknown and all it is is unknown. It doesn't mean it's not going to be great," she said. "Transitions are always rough, but they're also what life is made of. So I've learned to get better at them and I know that something good happens when you get out of the way." □



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